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## A JOURNALIST'S JOTTINGS.

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# A JOURNALIST'S JOTTINGS.

BY  
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COMMANDER OF THE IMPERIAL ORDER OF THE MEDJIDIEH, AND OF THE ROYAL ORDERS OF THE REDREMER, STAR OF ROUMANIA, CROWN OF ROUMANIA, AND TAKOVA OF SERVIA; KNIGHT OF THE IMPERIAL ORDER OF FRANCIS JOSEPH AND OF THE IMPERIAL ROYAL AUSTRIAN ORDER OF MERIT OF THE FIRST CLASS WITH THE GOLDEN CROWN, ETC., ETC.

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ETC., ETC.

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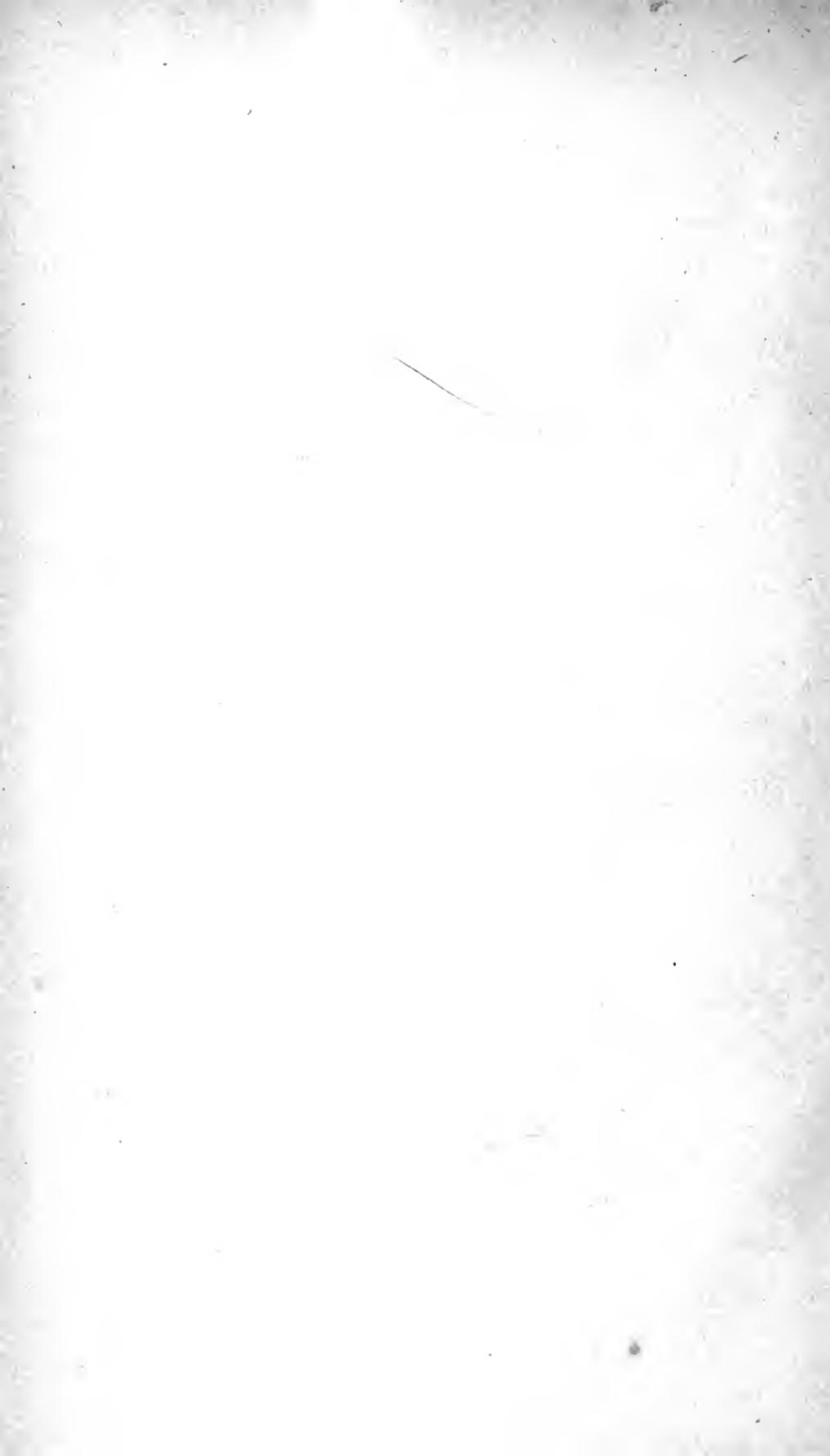
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## A JOURNALIST'S JOTTINGS.

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### THE SHOP-WINDOWS OF LONDON.

IT is an indisputable fact that the gratuitous displays daily set forth behind shop-windows, for the benefit of all who may choose to linger and gaze, constitute an important educational factor. Their teachings are suggestive and indirect more frequently than positive and direct, and are conveyed to the recipient in such easy ways that he takes them in, for the most part, quite unconsciously, totally ignoring the actual agent that is stimulating his intellectual faculties, provoking his curiosity, exciting his admiration, jogging his memory, and bidding his mind bestir itself to pursue briskly some new tract of thought or flight of fancy.

This method of conveying information and disseminating culture is almost always a pleasurable one. Its very practice is dependent on the individual will of the person instructed. No one is compelled to loiter in front of an *étagage* and stare persistently at the objects set out behind its crystal screen in order to attract the public eye. His response to the mute invitation of the show ~~arranged~~ for his entertainment is purely

a voluntary one. He can look as long as he pleases ; there is no charge for protracted contemplation ; and he must be a dull dog indeed if what he sees does not add something to his store of knowledge, or furnish him with some additional food for reflection.

It matters little what the speciality may be of the shop to the windows of which an intelligent person directs his attention. In these days of cosmopolitan industry and enterprise, when the "ends of the earth" are brought together by swift and sure means of communication, there is at the very least some suggestiveness in the humblest tradesman's shop-front. The necessaries as well as the luxuries of every-day life are procured for us from far-distant lands ; much of the bread and meat, vegetables and fruit that we eat, the liquors that we drink, the raiment in which we clothe ourselves, even the flowers with which we adorn our homes, has been collected and prepared for our use by aliens to our soil and speech, and many of these things have journeyed across the seas before reaching their goal—the shop-front in which they are displayed to our view. What sight is more likely to conjure up visions of sunlit islands "floating in dark purple spheres of sea" than that which may be seen every day, and all the year round, in any fruiterer's window ? Do not the glistening, supine creatures spread out on the fishmongers' moist marble slabs silently tell us strange tales of life-or-death human struggles with remorseless winds and unmerciful waves — of long vigils, imminent dangers, and terrible privations ? There are sermons in shop-windows, as

well as in stones, for those who know how to read them; whilst to those who have no taste for sermonising they teem with an infinite variety of amusement.

Among specially humanising and refining influences, the sources of which take their rise in certain shop-windows, those which are most effectively brought to bear upon the inhabitants of great cities emanate from *étagères* exclusively affected to the display of art objects. As far as London is concerned, gratuitous exhibitions of this class, such as are afforded by picture dealers, print sellers, retailers of photographs, "fancy" stationers, traffickers in bronzes, porcelain, pottery, *bric-à-brac*, art furniture, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese curios, Oriental carpets, and other woven fabrics, enamels and *cloisonné* work, Venetian and Bohemian glass, and countless other products of artistic industry, abound in the resorts of the wealthy and fashionable. But they are conspicuous by their infrequency in the suburban districts chiefly populated by the hard-working bees of our huge metropolitan hive. Even in these poverty-stricken and unpicturesque regions, however, there is no lack of shop-fronts displaying cheap periodicals illustrating contemporary history and current art—gay coloured lithographs and well-executed wood-cuts, the majority of which are not uncalculated to develop a sense of beauty in those who contemplate them, even supposing the latter to be wholly uninstructed in the laws of colour and form, perspective and proportion. Perhaps, in this particular direction, the most efficient entertainer and instructor of the masses is the shop-window of the photograph

vendor. In that most popular of gratuitous street-shows are exhibited the sensational realities, human and artistic, of the day, side by side with achievements of the past, destined to excite wonder and admiration for uncounted ages to come; the latest fashion and the remotest antiquity. Hereby are evanescent beauty and eternal loveliness brought alike within the cognisance of toilers whose life-surroundings, for the most part, are necessarily unbeautiful, and to whom the light-pictures of fair women, noble statues, stately cathedrals and palaces, picturesque land and sea-scapes, must appear like glimpses of a glorious world to which physical access is denied them. They are gleams of a state of existence at the conditions of which they could never even guess, did not photography reproduce some of its outward splendours and charms for their enlightenment. To the imaginative—and there are many such among our skilled operatives—symmetry of form is soothing, and beauty of colour exhilarating; hence all the art-displays afforded by shop-windows, even those of the devitalising photographs, are mediums of gratification, conveying to all sorts and conditions of people distinct sensations of happiness, keener or fainter in exact proportion to the greater or smaller receptiveness of each individual gazer. In holding the mirror up to nature, the leading retailers of photographs, whose establishments are to be found in two or three of the leading West End thoroughfares, keep pace with the times, while enabling their customers to go back at will to the wonders of past ages. It is a profitable part of their business to "shoot folly

as it flies ;" but their portfolios are big with abstract and brief chronicles of superb foregone feats of painting, sculpture, and architecture. The "society beauty" occupies a more prominent place in their display than the Venus of Milo ; but both these lovely creatures are there in effigy, and it is open to any casual lounger to compare their respective attractions of face and form at his leisure, having done which he is free to walk away in pleasing perplexity, not a penny the poorer for his indulgence in an optical feast. The photograph-vendor, the picture-dealer, the print-seller, the retailer of art-furniture, draperies, and hardware, even the stationer, whose notepaper, envelopes, and cards of seasonable greeting and congratulation are adorned with graceful designs—all these, and many other shopkeepers who "dress" their shop-fronts with beautiful objects, are benefactors to mankind, and contribute largely and inexpensively to the recreation of their fellow-creatures.

While strolling, however, through the busier streets of Western London, with an eye to the manifold attractions of shop-windows, it is impossible for any person familiar with the chief cities of the Continent not to be struck by the contrast between the commonplace methods generally adopted by English tradesmen for the arrangement and display of their wares, and the inventiveness of foreign shopkeepers in disposing and setting off their commodities by the aid of artistic accessories, so as to produce spectacular and picturesque effects. Symmetrical formality seems to be the prevalent notion of the London "dresser," who takes

infinite pains to achieve nicety of balance, in size and shape, whilst setting out the show. He is a bigot with respect to straight lines and equidistant tiers, and adheres fanatically to the sort of orderliness that conveys the impression of monotony to the onlooker. His Parisian, Viennese, or Milanese *confrière*, on the contrary, delights in that apparent spontaneity of grouping and composition which is really the outcome of intelligent experiment, guided by artistic feeling. In Paris, especially, the calling of the shop-front "dresser" assumes the dignity of a liberal profession. It is a career, and by no means an unremunerative one, for men and women alike who are poor but highly cultured, and who, above all, are endowed with correct and refined taste. In this sense it is scarcely recognised and all but unpractised in London, although our art-schools doubtless develop the faculty of tasteful and felicitous arrangement in many of their students, and although in all probability great establishments for the sale of ladies' apparel, high-class upholstery, and costly *objets d'art* would find it well worth their while to pay a handsome salary to a "dresser" gifted at once with conceptional originality, accurate judgment, and a fine feeling for contrasts of form and combinations of colour.

There is scarcely a branch of retail business, in the higher flights of London trade, in which the lack of artistic influence, as applied to the *étalage*, does not make itself deplorably manifest to the cultivated Englishman who has acquired an intimate acquaintance with the shop-front displays of the Parisian Boulevards,

Palais Royal, Rue de la Paix, and Avenue de l'Opéra, of the Viennese Graben and Kohlmarkt, and of the Milanese Galleria and Corso di Vittorio Emmanuele. Even our jewellers' glistening shows, with very few exceptions, are far behind those of the Continent, in respect to their window arrangements, which are dictated or prescribed by an inartistic instinct of preciseness. The French *bijoutier*, for instance, scarcely ever ranges his *étuis* or cases of richly set gems on crystal slabs or mirror shelves, which confuse the eye and divert the attention by their puzzling repetitions and rivalry of glitter. He clothes the framework of his shop-front in soft, low-toned fabrics, and imbeds his jewels and gold in deep-coloured nests of plush and velvet, bound, so to speak, in tawny or russet morocco. He affords welcome relief to the dazzle of diamonds and the glow of precious metal by introducing here and there a cold, chaste statuette, or a vase of tender hue and classical shape.

This element of decoration and contrast, by the way, is in high favour among the great costumiers and silk-drapers, the perfumers, and carpet-manufacturers of France and Italy. In their shop-windows graceful sculptures and magnificent pieces of Oriental pottery and European *faïence* are happily interpolated among the latest fashions, the richest stuffs, sparkling scent-flasks and embroidered sachets, tapestry, and rugs of price, European and Oriental, making up a *coup-d'œil* of exquisite harmony and inexpressible charm. Indeed, in French and Italian *étagères* not exclusively connected with the plastic arts, the display of beautiful

objects, not for sale, but purely for embellishment, has of late years become a marked and attractive feature of retail trading enterprise. It might be adopted with advantage by a large number of London firms, for, like the tasteful draping of pictures and art-furniture, it irresistibly draws public attention to the articles with which it is associated, and thus promotes their sale. Even the vendors of imitation jewellery in the Palais Royal employ it lavishly to set off the mock splendour of their mimic gauds and *pacotille* ornaments, arranging bead necklaces, strass and pebble *parures* and embossed silver trinkets in pretty devices on broad panels faced with violet velvet or *lie-de-vin* silk, and framed in soft drapery of delicate neutral tints. Decorative trifles, thrown into strong relief by such elegant backgrounds as these, almost invariably seem handsomer and more valuable than they really are; and illusions of this kind seldom fail to bring grist to the tradesman's mill. As a matter of fact, Continental retailers are greatly indebted to the "dresser's" art, which exercises a fascinating influence upon peoples more readily impressionable and perhaps more keenly alive to artistic effects of composition and colour than we are. The gift of devising and preparing beautiful eye-snares wherein to catch the public is much appreciated and liberally remunerated in Paris, where the "dresser" is often regarded by his commercial employers as an inspired being, who may be expected at a certain hour of the morning to roll his eye in a "fine frenzy," and whose directions are to be carried out implicitly, however eccentric or revolutionary the

may appear to the ordinary shopkeeping mind. Young painters and sculptors do not disdain his acquaintance, and he has free access to their studios, where he picks up many a valuable hint relative to grouping, arrangement of draperies, harmonies of hue, and contrasts of colour. In short, he—sometimes she—is a Parisian institution, conspicuously exemplifying the fact that, in the French capital at least, special talent of any kind is certain to obtain recognition, and, what is more, to secure a profitable market.

The genial inspirations and deft touch of the artistic shop-front “dresser” are badly wanted in the majority of London retail establishments, the “shows” of which would be far more attractive were they set out with less formality and uniformity. It is easy enough, by ingenious grouping and the introduction of a few pretty accessories, to avoid monotony of colour and form even in the *étagage* of the dog-skin glove-shop or of the ready-made boot and shoe emporium. London hosiers might take more than one useful hint from their fellow-tradesmen in Paris, Florence, and Milan, who rarely vulgarise their windows by lining them with long rows of scarlet socks or serried ranks of Balbriggan stockings, but offer variety of colour and pattern and a diversity of articles to the eye of the *flâneur*. Again, the puritanical sobriety of our tailoring displays is almost studiously unattractive. Why should they be restricted to stunted columns of tweeds and plethoric scrolls of cloth, exactly equidistant from one another, and carefully laid out in vexatiously accurate order, like the ruins of Roman temples under the Italian dispensation? Coat and

trouser stuffs lend themselves naturally to all manner of draping contrivance, and compose well with china jars, majolica vases, and the broad, lustrous green leaves of certain exotic plants. There are few more depressing sights in this metropolis than the show of some of our most fashionable tailors, whose window arrangements seem inspired by the wish to repel casual custom, and to plunge the harmless spectator into deep and abiding melancholy. This is a characteristic of many shops affected to the sale of raiment exclusively worn by the sterner sex. The hatter's display is pervaded by a shiny gloom ; that of the shirt-maker often fails to exhilarate the most buoyant nature—grim battalions of cravats attached to stiff, neckless collars puzzle the will, and make us rather wear the ties we have than fly to others that we know not of. Multitudes of things, huddled together tier above tier, breed perplexity and beget indecision. If London tradesmen were to thin out the “dressing” of their shop-fronts, and to some extent individualise their wares, they would do a larger business with the *quid-nunc* class of purchaser than that which they at present transact.

Among the cheeriest-looking shops in this huge city are those in which appetising displays of comestibles mutely but eloquently appeal to the liveliest sympathies of mankind. Upon these “brave shows” rich and poor alike gaze with keen and unflagging interest. Human beings, however well off, do not want a new coat or bonnet, a sapphire ring, or even an inlaid cabinet, every afternoon ; but they must dine once a day, not to say breakfast, lunch, and perhaps sup. Hence, the

substances provided for their nourishment are matters of serious importance to them. Besides, the *étalages* of London fishmongers and poulterers are in themselves really worth looking at, apart from the attractive fact that what they exhibit is meant to be eaten. There are butter and bacon shops, too, within a mile of Charing Cross, that regale the eye as well as the inward man. What our fruiterers have to show is beautiful *per se*, but is seldom arranged with a happy fancy or an elegant taste. It is strange that London greengrocers' displays should be as commonplace as they generally are, considering the decorative nature of the material at the disposal of the vegetable-vendor—the rich verdure, the gay carrot, gleaming turnip, burnished tomato, and bronze-coated potato. There is no spectacular or artistic inducement to linger before the window of a baker's shop, which lacks incident, and is not nearly so entertaining as the neighbouring dispensary of ham and beef, or the seductive sausage-shop round the corner. These, again, are naught, as far as picturesque-ness is concerned, in comparison with the splendid *charcuterie* establishments of Paris—indeed, of every large French town—a casual glance at which stimulates the jaded appetite, and causes the sincere gastronome's mouth to water. There may be seen, interspersed with graceful plants and bunches of fresh flowers, superb truffled trophies of white poultry, galantines, and “pieds de mouton,” pyramids of raised pies, obelisks of pure lard, devices executed in boxes of *conserves*, marbled boars' heads, countless varieties of *saucisson*, *andouilles*, and *tripes à la saucisse*, dainty heaps of

cream-coloured snails, delicately stuffed and ready for the *casserole*, sweet little glazed hams and tongues, jars of lustrous caviare, and pale yellow *terrines* of all shapes and sizes, hailing from Perigord and Strassburg. There is a *charcutier's* shop in the Rue de Rivoli that is one of the sights of Paris. We have nothing like it in London, which is also forlorn of any comestible emporium entitled to compare, otherwise than unfavourably, with such an establishment as Borchardt's "Delikatessen-Handlung" in Berlin. Why is this thus? I confess myself at a loss to account for London's shortcomings in this respect, for her citizens love good things and can afford to indulge in them.

The contrast between Paris and London shop-fronts, especially as regards the artistic element present in the former and absent from the latter, is noticeable in well-nigh every branch of trade. Nothing, for instance, can be imagined more prosaic and uninteresting than the arrangements of our gun-makers' and stick-sellers' *étalages*, with their wares disposed in upright rows, so close together as to be all but undistinguishable from one another—a picture of dull order and stupid symmetry, unrelieved by the least spark of imagination or suggestion of contrivance. Our poulters, too, are neglectful of the vast potentialities open to them in the way of grouping and displaying their stock-in-trade. They are, however, free from the reproach that brands their far more artistic colleagues throughout Italy, where song-birds of every variety are exposed for sale side by side with ducks and geese, turkeys and capons, pigeons and quails. Sadly hanging from tiny hooks one may

espy the trustful robin—he is eaten on toast—the tuneful but bitter thrush, the mellifluous blackbird, and clusters of pretty little finches, each a toothsome but remorseful mouthful. The Roman poult erer, moreover, provides carrion birds for his poorer customers, and experiences no difficulty in disposing of them at moderate prices. Owls, hawks, and crows find their way from the Campagna to his “stabilimento,” where they seldom linger long. Boiled owl is not a figure of speech in the Eternal City, for Minerva’s bird is said to make uncommonly strong, high-flavoured broth, and its mousing propensities by no means deter the descendants of Romulus from utilising it, as well as the omnivorous crow, as a savoury soup-basis. Hawks are generally roasted and eaten with fried bread ; while the hedge-snake is dressed *à l’anguille*, and ranks high among Roman popular dainties.

London is a city with the area of a county and the population of a kingdom. Its size is so great that different parts of it are commonly spoken of as though they were divisions of a continent. One talks of North and South London just as distinctly as of North and South America. No other European capital enjoys this dignity. To converse with a Frenchman, German, or Austrian about North or South Paris, Berlin, or Vienna would be to perplex him parlously ; whereas the term North London or South London conveys the idea of a special urban entity to any ordinary Englishman’s mind. The two districts are so distant from one another that they frequently differ in temperature and climatic conditions. North London

is from time to time buried in fog while South London is bathed in sunshine, and *vice versa*. On one and the same morning or afternoon it is often two degrees colder in Canonbury than at Brixton. Within the limits of the Metropolitan Postal District itself many respective characteristics of London's northern and southern suburbs are in striking contrast. Highbury is curiously unlike Clapham; Holloway could not possibly be mistaken for Camberwell, save, perhaps, by an exceptionally unintelligent foreigner on a first visit to the British capital. It is far easier nowadays than of yore for a central Londoner to take stock of these differences, for both North and South London are provided with elaborate systems of tramway communication—one of their few common characteristics—and can be traversed swiftly and comfortably, in almost every direction, at the cost of a few pence. If the explorer of these opposite regions, each of which is about equidistant from Hyde Park corner, be in search of fresh window-displays and shop-fronts new, he will find the tramcar a convenient vehicle wherein to glide along the main suburban trading thoroughfares from one point of interest to another; less jolty and noisy, and, for short distances, even cheaper than its rumbling rival, the omnibus. Tramways have their drawbacks, of course, too generally known to need recapitulation here; but on the whole, it must be admitted by any unprejudiced person that, like a certain trinity of celebrated pens, they "come as a boon and a blessing to men." In venerable Italian cities of exceptionally antique picturesqueness tramways are out of keeping

with the architectural features of the streets to which modern enterprise has adapted them. It may justly be said of them, for instance, that they vulgarise the general aspect of Rome. They cannot, however, vulgarise that of suburban London, by reason of its intrinsic and uniform commonplaceness, while they afford a means of locomotion which is not only rapid and inexpensive, but relatively luxurious to boot, the tramway companies having been induced to fit up their cars with a view to the comfort of their customers by the consideration that emulation hath a thousand 'buses "that one by one pursue." Having the inspection of shop-windows for its object, a "Journey Due North," or due South for that matter, must obviously be performed to a considerable extent on foot. Nevertheless, even in the shoppiest neighbourhoods outside the frontiers of fashion, residential "solutions of continuity" occur here and there. The fatigue, outlay, and loss of time incident to getting over these breaks in the line of route selected may be minimised by the judicious utilisation of the tramcar.

A good starting-point for a northerly expedition of the class more particularly referred to above is the "Angel" at Islington. Turning up High Street by that renowned hostelry, a short stroll brings you to a dingy little oasis or enclosure of grass, from which branch out three great arterial highways, all shoppy, and all supplied with abundant tram service. These are Liverpool Road, bearing slightly to the nor'-nor'-west; Upper Street, running due north into its wider continuation, the Holloway Road; and Essex Road, which skirts

the Canonbury and Highbury regions in a north-easterly direction, apparently with the idea of getting to Stoke Newington *tout d'un train*, but being foiled in its purpose by the Balls Pond Road, in which it merges its individuality, and "loses the name of action." These three broad, well-paved thoroughfares traverse the heart of North London, and open up the farthermost recesses of the several districts which, under different names, constitute that vast metropolitan region. The districts in question, one and all, are lavishly provided with shops of a character far superior to that of the East End retail establishments, albeit distinctly less brilliant and costly, as far as their window-displays are concerned, than the majority of West End shops. From this circumstance one is justified in drawing the inference that the inhabitants of North London are for the most part people of moderate income, neither rich nor poor, but enjoying a "happy mesne" of worldly well-being.

Islington, taken as the type of the district marked N. in the postal map of London, occupies, so to speak, the *juste milieu* between Whitechapel and Mayfair. It is a cheap, not a sordid, neighbourhood, putting forward no futile pretensions to fashion or finery, and fully meeting the views of its population with respect to the necessities and solid comforts of every-day life. In High Street and Upper Street of Islington proper, for instance, the prices of things in general run low, while the articles offered for sale appear to be of good sterling quality. It was in the former of these bustling thoroughfares that I noticed among the stock of a

somewhat miscellaneous shop, a “parcel” of 7,500 brand-new English “novels of the day,” published at a shilling, and selling freely for threepence-halfpenny each, exactly half the trade price of works belonging to that particular category of current cheap literature. I examined several of these works, which were in every respect what their vendor’s announcement professed them to be—figments by living authors, fresh from the printers’ and binders’ hands, and displaying the words “One Shilling” on their covers. How, I asked myself, can any profit accrue to author, publisher, or retailer by the sale of these books at less than one-third of their nominal price? Probably the correct answer to this question would involve the disclosure of some occult trade secret, into the mysteries of which the profane could scarcely penetrate without incurring some sacrifice of their peace of mind.

Noticeable among the shop-window displays of the North, when the year is waning, are those in which many varieties of imitation fur and sealskin make amazingly cheap bids for public favour. The boa, which I had been accustomed to regard as a mere sumptuary tradition of the early Victorian age, figures frequently, if somewhat sadly, in these shows, a peculiarly mournful black variety, resembling a gigantic hairy caterpillar after immersion in an ink-vat, being apparently in great demand at two and ninepence-halfpenny. Judging by the large number of fur tippets which I have seen hung up for sale on the western side of High Street, that unsatisfactory article of winter equipment must have attained an almost un-

exampled popularity among the fair Islingtonians; and yet I did not notice a single tippet in actual wear during my protracted *flânerie* in a region which I should incline to characterise as the "prim and prosaic" rather than as the "true and tender North." Not that it altogether ignores the fine arts, after the matter-of-fact manner of the grim East End. There are a few good music shops, picture stores, and establishments in which painting and drawing materials, easels, and jointed wooden models are purchasable, scattered about in the chief streets of Islington, Holloway, Highbury, Canonbury, and Kingsland, where the pianoforte and harmonium are also recognised as possible acquisitions.

These things, however, must be classed among the rarer luxuries of North London, whereas the marked prevalence of sweetstuff shops throughout that region seems to indicate that its inhabitants are in the habit of indulging in daily orgies of lollipops. The displays of variegated "rock," prismatic sugarstick, and polychromatic spheres of transparent and sticky sweetness are sufficiently numerous to suggest to the analogical reasoner that the practice of the Northern dentist must be a lucrative one, and that the Boreal chemist's calling can scarcely lack pecuniary charm. Among the Islington sweets of the more popular "assortments" I noticed a novel and somewhat startling variety of "goody" in proximity to a trayful of diminutive white pigs, faintly streaked with pink suggestions of bacon. I was mindful of a remote familiarity with these latter objects, to the immediate

and exclusive purpose of which the name of “sucking-pig” is not altogether inappropriate. With their near neighbours, however—sugar effigies of the common or garden mouse—considered as a comestible, I had never foregathered, even in childhood’s greediest and most reckless hour. In point of fact, I had never set eyes on them before they met my gaze, calmly reposing in the *étagage* of an Upper Street *confiseur*; and it struck me, while contemplating their recumbent forms, that surely a mouse would be the last quadruped any timorous infant would wish to suck.

A few other specialities of Northern shop-fronts, connected with trade and industry, are perhaps worthy of passing mention. Labels of a peculiarly livid hue are much affected by tailors, ready-made clothiers, and ladies’ mercers, as the medium of advertising the qualities and prices of their wares; in fact, the Livid Label may confidently be pronounced a North London institution. Pickles, the strange ubiquitousness and preternatural cheapness of which are simply bewildering, must be a leading staple of human food in Islington, where a lifelong revel of thick piccalilli or clear cold-drawn onions need not be foregone on economic grounds by the humblest possessor of a solitary sixpence. Northern tastes, while manifestly frugal, teem with abrupt and vigorous contrast; else it were impossible that they should reveal this equal relish for the sweets of candy and the sours of pickle. A tendency to favour antithesis as a local characteristic is conspicuously evinced by more than one variety of Holloway and Canonbury tradesman in respect to the wares he offers

for sale. In one showy shop-window, for instance, may be seen oil lamps and portmanteaus side by side; in another, orange wine and hardbake; in a third—that of a popular restaurateur—stewed eels and pea-soup, conspicuously “billed,” too, on the walls of the establishment as the two culinary achievements upon the unrivalled preparation of which its proprietor has based the lofty fabric of his fame. These are quaint combinations, suggestive of originality of thought and eccentricity of disposition in their contrivers. So is a significant announcement, several feet high, set forth at the doorway of a working tailor’s shop, to the effect that “Coats are turned in six hours.” In political circles the operation has not unfrequently been effected in an even shorter time than it apparently takes in Highbury, where, as a feat of pure and unadulterated tailoring, it boldly challenges competition in eight-inch letters of impressive conspicuity.

Before quitting North London, I may observe that all its main thoroughfares are broad, clean, well paved, and flanked with fine, roomy *trottoirs*. As a rule, one of their sides is residential and the other commercial, this arrangement alternating fitfully in different portions of their course. Displays of butcher’s meat are few, far between, and unattractive. On the other hand, poulters are frequent, and their shows of game, “at the season of the year,” furred and feathered alike, can hold their own with those of the West End. As pheasants and hares are by no means cheap eating, this fact requires explanation. The paucity in North London of fish, so omnipresent in the East and South, is

also a perplexing circumstance. Neither Islington nor Holloway can justly claim to be the fishmongers' Paradise, though conclusive evidence of a popular predilection for low-priced oysters is to hand in both districts. Within their precincts, moreover, the pavement-delineator of a lighthouse with a heavy sea on, supported on either side by an entire mackerel and half a salmon respectively, medallion-wise, is apparently unmolested by constituted authority, and does a remunerative business. Parochial street-sweepers do not ruthlessly rub out his works of art at the behest of stern policemen, as is their unmerciful wont in other and more fashionable parts of this metropolis. Over certain broad, smoothly-flagged spaces skirting the great Northern roadways, he exercises rights of prescription, and sits at the receipt of custom on a scrap of matting, hard by the productions of his genius, every now and anon touching up a blurred outline or deepening a faded colour with a morsel of tinted chalk. He, too, in a small and isolated way, is an institution of Northern London, and his harmless exhibition of seascape and "still life" is one of the few open-air shows that "draw" the public steadfastly by day and by night.

"There is an end to all mundane things," says a modern Berlinese proverb, "except to the Neue Friedrichstrasse." After careful exploration of South London I have come to the conclusion that the exception in question is at the very least as applicable to the Old Kent Road. This interminable causeway is also known by various titles in different parts of its course;

unlike the Friedrichstrasse, however, it frequently deviates from the *linea recta*, whilst preserving its individuality throughout many meanderings. Were it a river instead of a road, geographers would probably describe it as "rising in the Borough, and flowing into the sea at Dover." It is reputed to be one of the oldest thoroughfares in the United Kingdom, and antiquarians trace its origin back to the days of the Roman invasion. The Londoner of to-day, gliding over its surface in a comfortable tramcar, let us say on his way to Greenwich with a view to partaking of flounder-zootje, whitebait and iced punch, is, in all probability, following the self-same route along which Cæsar's hardy legions marched from the Kentish coast "far into the bowels of the land," some nineteen hundred and forty years ago. Despite its great and indisputable antiquity, the Old Kent Road is at present one of the most modern-looking and lively thoroughfares of this gigantic metropolis, bearing, moreover, a strong family resemblance to several of the less fashionable Parisian boulevards in respect to its almost perfect straightness, stately width, brilliant lighting, double rows of fine healthy trees, broad flagged *trottoirs*, expensively paved roadways, tramway lines, omnibus traffic, and, finally, long vistas of gay shop-fronts. From an architectural point of view, of course, the Old Kent Road is altogether British ; brick, browned to dinginess by age and fog, is the material of which the majority of its houses have been built, for the most part after the ignominious bandbox pattern for which the Georgian era was disagreeably renowned.

In this highway, as well as in several other important suburban thoroughfares, there is a difference of from thirty to fifty feet between the shop-frontage and the house-line. Manifestly, the original occupants of the dwellings on either side the road were not "in business," at least not in that part of the capital. They went in for fresh air, and for the "front garden" which, from time immemorial, has constituted the English townsman's *rus in urbe*. As London grew, and the wants of its outlying populations developed in proportion to the numerical increase, the trading opportunities afforded by all this garden ground prompted later generations of Old Kent-roaders to run up shops upon its surface, and to gather crops of currency from the soil in which they and those before them had thitherto planted bulbs and sown annuals.

It was commercial enterprise that called into existence the long lines of one-storeyed sheds now intervening between footways and house-fronts on either side of more than one great South London thoroughfare, to the especial comfort and joy of the Kentish and Surrey cats. The flat roofs of these outbuildings, ranged side by side for hundreds of yards at a stretch, furnish spacious pleasaunces and extensive battle-grounds to the feline race, renowned of old for its prowess in love and war, and resound by night with the plaintive wail of wooing and the strident clamour of combat—the passionate strains of the solitary serenader, the fierce defiances of rival suitors for the favour of some fury flirt, and the direful din of casual "alarums and excursions." With respect to the harbouring and fostering of cats, I believe

that there is only one city in Europe which excels South London—to wit, Lisbon, where the harmless necessary mouser would appear to have matters pretty much its own way. The inhabitants of the Portuguese capital are so fondly addicted to cats that they cannot dispense with them even in places of public entertainment. According to a celebrated American prima donna, Madame Emma Nevada, the management of the Lisbon Opera House maintains a permanent staff of seventy cats, which pervade the wings and flies during rehearsals, and are always received with enthusiasm by the audience when—"single spies or in battalions"—it pleases them to "take the stage" while the curtain is up. Some of these cats, justly renowned for correctness of ear, do not hesitate to squall their disapproval when any vocalist, no matter how famous, happens to sing more than usually out of tune. I have been given to understand that the typical Old Kent Road grimalkin, lacking the critical faculty, is silent with respect to the musical performances that abound in that neighbourhood. Not even the local barrel-organ can elicit a moan from him. He caterwauls out of sheer "cussedness."

South London is justly celebrated for the brilliancy and variety of its shop-window displays. Retail establishments of impressive size and amazing splendour are plentiful all round the "Elephant and Castle," as well as in the broad thoroughfares converging to that famous hostelry from Clapham, Streatham, and Brixton, and in the six great roads branching out from the "rond-point" in the centre of which stands a home-made obelisk, commemorative, I believe, of some transpontine

event in which one of the "Four Georges" played a conspicuous part. Not a stone's-throw from either of these great Southern centres of trade and traffic are situate the colossal emporia of "Universal Providers," many storeys high, and illuminated at night-time with electric light ; of drapers, clothiers, hosiers, hatters, and bootmakers, in a large way of business, who set off their wares to great advantage by the aid of acres of plate-glass and millions of cubic feet of gas. The large shops of this region, comprising the New Kent Road, Newington Causeway, London Road, Westminster Bridge Road, Walworth Road, and Newington Butts, are as a rule far more brilliantly lighted up than those of the chief West End thoroughfares, with which, indeed, they compare favourably in respect to the tasteful setting-out of their *étagères*, and to their general smartness. They provide intelligently and exhaustively for the æsthetic as well as the material requirements of the South Londoner, who, save in search of high-class dramatic and musical entertainments, exhibitions of pictures, and expensive restaurants, need never cross the water or travel out of his own district from one year's end to another. Within a few minutes' stroll of St. George's Circus he can spend a princely income, if he be fortunate enough to possess such a thing, in sparkling jewellery, costly upholstery, rich silks, satins, and velvets, grand pianofortes, handsome china and glass, rare engravings, and ancient and modern *bric-à-brac*. Many of the larger and newer shops in that part of the S.E. postal district lying between the river and St. George's Circus go far, by the splendour of their

window-shows, to prove that the majority of their customers must be people of ample means and cultivated tastes. Those of the Old Kent Road and of its eastward continuation, the New Cross Road, manifestly cater for the wants of the lower-middle and working classes. At least one-half of their total number is affected to the sale of eatables and drinkables ; and on Saturday nights, when the thoroughfares in question are to be seen in all their glory, long rows of barrows and stalls fringe either kerb-stone of their broad side-walks, illuminated by garish naphtha flames, and shaded at intervals, during summer-tide, by rustling canopies of green foliage. There are few more picturesque sights in London than the open-air markets and gaily-lighted lines of shop-fronts of the Old Kent Road, viewed from the high roof of a Westminster and Greenwich tramcar on a fine Saturday night.

Among the articles offered for sale in shops and on barrows alike the chief staples of human food are predominant. Incredible quantities of butcher's meat of all sorts—fresh, salted, and smoked ; of butter, cheese, and eggs ; of poultry, game, ham, sides of bacon ; of flushed and pallid sausages, polonies, brawn, pork-pies, and pettitoes ; of household bread, fancy loaves, cakes, tarts, and patties, are displayed in the glazed or paneless frontages of the outbuildings covering the whilom *parterres* of the Old Kent Road. The prevalence of butchers' and cheesemongers' shops—generally side by side, and all manifestly doing a roaring trade—is something which must be seen to be believed in. In no other suburban thoroughfare do I remember to have

witnessed eager and vociferous competition for custom carried on simultaneously by three contiguous butchers, each vehemently supported by a staff of formidable-looking myrmidons armed with cleaver, knife, and steel. The conspicuous handiness of lethal weapons imparts a somewhat alarming aspect to this passionate trade rivalry, which, however, remains peaceful, and leads to the achievement now and then of surprisingly good bargains by poverty-stricken purchasers at an advanced hour of the night. Swine-flesh evidently enjoys great favour among the South Londoners, who, judging by the provision made for them in this particular direction, must be enthusiastic amateurs of dairy-fed pork, American bacon, "Cambridge" sausages, and every other imaginable variety of edible yielded by that beneficent friend of man, the pig. The Belgian rabbit, it would seem, chiefly divides their affection with the British porker.

It is curious to reflect, while taking note of the enormous run upon that timorous and succulent rodent in metropolitan "cheap neighbourhoods," that throughout the German Empire bunny is stigmatised and held in horror as "vermin," and that no self-respecting son of Teut, while abiding on the sacred soil of the Fatherland, would venture to partake of the most appetising rabbit "smothered in onions," or of the most savoury "gibelotte de lapin." When once a German has "bettered himself" by quitting his own country and settling down in England or France, he takes to rabbit with a promptitude befitting his innate plasticity of taste and temperament, and no fox is keener on the

track of the “feeble folk” than he. Similarly, he develops an ardent fondness for dressed crab, which is abhorrent to him in the land of his birth. He has even been known, while sojourning among us, to toy with the stimulating cockle, and dally with the juicy whelk, British dainties tabooed by German popular prejudice as utterly unfit for human consumption. These delicacies, as well as many other varieties of shell-fish, among which cheap oysters, mussels, and periwinkles figure conspicuously in moist heaps, fragrant of the ocean, are sold in vast quantities by the proprietors and lessees of the barrows and stalls that face the glittering shop-fronts of the principal South London arterial high roads. Such *al-fresco* traders also do a large business in the less expensive kinds of fruit and vegetables, keeping the shop prices of these articles down at an abnormally low level, and blighting the commercial bliss of old-established local greengrocers, who have to pay rent, taxes, long gas accounts, and family expenses out of trade profits sensibly diminished by the competition of the costermongering interest, itself all but unhampered by the burdens that the regular shopkeeper is fain to bear as best he may.

If the population of South London be not abundantly nourished, it is certainly not through any shortcomings in the way of supply; for the dealings in comestibles, both under cover and *sub cælo*, are enormous. Moreover, the frequent recurrence at short intervals of those lustrous-coloured globes popularly associated with the azure pill and sable draught seems to indicate that indigestion—an ailment seldom super-

induced by low diet—is not altogether unfamiliar to the denizens of that thriving district, which also appears to be a happy hunting-ground for the dentist tribe, mainly indebted to dyspepsia for the extent and lucrativeness of its operations. Throughout the great length of the tramway line connecting New Cross with the “Elephant and Castle,” on either side of the road, wherever the luminous line of outbuilt shop-fronts is broken by dark residential gaps, may be seen brass plates and fanlight inscriptions announcing that “one who gathers molars, dreadful trade!” is accessible between such and such hours of the morning and afternoon to those who, “being troubled with a raging tooth,” yearn for cheap and painless alleviation of their anguish.

Another striking feature of these rare intervals of faded garden, fronting curiously shabby houses as yet free from the “social stigma of retail,” is the local club—an institution which appears to have taken deep root in pretty nearly every part of South London. Two or three of these associations are surrounded by clusters of “dental surgeries,” from the external glass cases of which gleaming sets of artificial teeth grin at the members as they approach the club portals. It may be presumed that a dentist in practice next door to a political club—and nearly all the South London clubs are avowedly affected to one or other of the great parties which alternately govern this country—having an eye to business, makes a point of adopting the principles of the adjacent association; for what Conservative victim of toothache would trust

his throbbing jaw to the manipulation of a Radical extractor, or *vice versa*?

Politics of all party shades of colour, from primrose to shamrock, manifestly run high in the Old Kent Road and its succursals. Perhaps that fact and the local passion for shell-fish are the reasons why the neighbourhood, to all appearances, is such an uncommonly thirsty one. It affords every imaginable kind of accommodation for those who, fevered by a surfeit of politics or periwinkles, may be beset by a craving for alcoholic refreshment. At vantage-points, where it is intersected by broad and busy streets, stand sturdy, old-fashioned inns, surrounded on three sides by wide stone spaces, each with its tall sign-post and swinging, creaking sign of homely significance, such as "The Kentish Drovers," "The Rose and Crown," and "The King's Head," holding out good promise of rare old stingo, sound wines, "neat" liquors, and wholesome food for man and beast. There are a dozen such archaic hostellries between Newington Butts and Royal Greenwich. What may be the number of the public-houses, gin-palaces, and beer-shops studding both sides of the stately highway connecting those southern suburbs I cannot attempt to conjecture. Blazing with gaslight, gorgeous with plate-glass, gilding, and "enamel paint," they recur on either side of the road in such quick succession as to suggest the alarming notion that the population to which they owe their *raison d'être* must be mainly composed of confirmed dipsomaniacs. How otherwise could so mighty a host of licensed victuallers as that which has taken up its

quarters in South London pay for the brilliant illuminations and decorative splendour that exercise an irresistible attractive force upon thousands of its poorer tributaries?

It can scarcely be wondered at that the working bees of our huge suburban hives, lacking cheap and cheerful amusements, as they unquestionably do, and finding their leisure hours consequently hang heavily upon their hands, should yield to the temptations held out to them by bright light, genial warmth, gay colours, and strong stimulants, all of which they may enjoy at small cost within the precincts of these anti-temperance establishments, which to them must appear, by comparison with the smallness, obscurity, and general grimness of their own dull houses, a sort of terrestrial version of those "mansions in the sky," for the future occupancy of which they are sometimes exhorted to qualify themselves whilst living from the cradle to the grave in a chronic state of "poverty, hunger, and dirt." To uncounted numbers of the pleasureless poor in this great gloomy London of ours, with its sombre sky, depressing climate, and paucity of recreative resource, the garish, gaudy gin-palace must, indeed, seem "a little heaven here below." Who, save the hard-hearted Pharisee, can dare to censure them because "they have been there and still will go"? If, in the course of my peregrinations through East and South London, whilst on the look out for special characteristics of local trade, I have seen many a saddening sight, the causes of which might only too readily be traced back to a public-house bar, it would

be equally unjust solely to blame the chief actors in these humiliating scenes for yielding to overpowering temptation, or to lay their misadventures exclusively at the door of the dispenser of stimulants, who, after all, works as hard as any other retail tradesman to earn an honest livelihood, and, as a rule, conducts his business in an orderly, law-abiding, and respectable manner. The vice of intemperance is rarely innate; neither is it expressly fostered in human beings by those who are employed in ministering to their wants. There are many factors in the strange problem of life which drive men to drink; the despair engendered by hopeless poverty, the craving for excitement resulting from excessive boredom or from lack of intellectual resources, not to mention the thousand provocations of everyday human mishaps and disappointments. To many men and women of hard lives and small intelligence, alcohol affords swift solace for their troubles and brief oblivion of their privations. Popular education, by increasing their store of knowledge and broadening their views, is rapidly supplying them with consolatory alternatives to the gin-bottle. Could they be cheaply amused, as well as cheaply taught, the attractions of the public-house would soon cease to charm them, and the most glittering features of such busy, bustling, brilliant suburban thoroughfares as the Old Kent Road would, in all probability, suffer gradual but irrevocable obliteration.

Any inveterate West Ender who may wish to test the truth of the old saying, "One half of the world does not know how the other half lives," can readily

accomplish his desire by performing a brief and inexpensive pilgrimage to the Far East of this huge congeries of cities, and by passing in review the shop-fronts that furnish forth the street shows upon which some hundreds of thousands of his fellow-townsfolk are mainly dependent for their daily and nightly amusement. Let him descend into the bowels of the earth at any station of our underground railway system, invest a few pence in the purchase of a ticket for the Whitechapel terminus, and, there arrived, direct his steps due eastwards, along one of the broadest, straightest, and longest thoroughfares of which any European capital can boast. This arterial avenue may be said to commence at Uxbridge and finish at Stratford, for it undoubtedly connects those outlying districts by a roadway of uninterrupted continuity. For the purposes of exploration to which I have above alluded, however, it commences, properly speaking, at Aldgate, where Leadenhall and Fenchurch Streets converge, and thence, under the names of Aldgate High Street, Whitechapel High Street, Whitechapel Road, Mile End Road, and Bow Road, follows a direct line to the industrial suburb of Bow.

The East End of London might appropriately be styled, like Washington, U.S., a "city of magnificent distances," for it is traversed by streets of exceptional length and width. Of these are the Bethnal Green Road (supplemented by Green Street and the Roman Road), to the northward of, and running parallel with, the great avenue above described, and the Commercial Road, the continuation of which (East India Dock Road)

skirts the vast riverside and dock region intervening between the Tower and Poplar, and comprising the amphibious districts of Shadwell, Stepney, and Limehouse. Within the limits of this area have been committed the seven successive gruesome murders that still constitute the most appalling and impenetrable mystery of modern crime. Of all the London Postal districts this is the one most in need of kindly and practical help to sustain its patient industries against the squalor, depravity, and crime which ebb and flow in its midst. It is also, on the whole, the uncomeliest, in spite of its huge highways and stately blocks of model lodging-houses and workmen's dwellings; for even its finest streets are skirted on either side by sordid buildings, rarely more than two storeys high, and for the most part exemplifying the ugliest varieties of cheap and depressing domestic architecture. As a rule, the ground floors of these edifices are occupied by small tradesmen, at whose shop-fronts it is well worth any intelligent Londoner's while to take a cursory glance, selecting the Whitechapel Road itself, and a few of its affluents, as characteristic types of the enormous neighbourhood east of Houndsditch and the Minories which is practically a *terra incognita* to four-fifths of the metropolitan population.

The Whitechapel Road possesses one "side-walk"—that flanking the northern side of its roadway—unparalleled in any other part of town for breadth and massiveness of paving. This *trottoir* is itself as wide as many a palatial City lane, and on something more than a moiety of its smooth-flagged surface is

transacted—especially on Saturday evenings—the greater part of the retail business of Whitechapel, *sub Jove frigido*, and by the garish light of innumerable flaring jets of naphtha. The picturesqueness of the spectacle afforded by this seemingly interminable vista of glittering, glowing open-air market would be greatly enhanced during eight months of the year were the main East End thoroughfare, like the Old and New Kent Roads across the water, liberally planted with healthy limes and beeches, upon the silky green of whose luxuriant foliage the gaslight and naphtha glare would play fitfully in high summertide. With the aid of trees in plenty, and of architectural reform in moderation, this Whitechapel Road might be converted into a boulevard of which London would have abundant reason to be proud. It already owns a merrily-tinkling tramway service; it is as long as the Nevskoï Perspective, and as broad as two Oxford Streets. To make it a popular promenade, on which pleasure and business might be harmoniously combined, all it wants is a little enlivening by the judicious introduction of green leaves, smart shops, comfortable places of amusement, and brilliant lighting, with a few gracefully-designed benches here and there—there is ample room for them on either side—for the temporary accommodation of the weary.

At present the aspect of the Whitechapel Road is bleak, dreary, and, above all, deadly dull, like the unlovely, poverty-stricken district to which it belongs. The East Enders, men, women, and children alike, are manifestly under the influence of the gloom that pervades their district—a gloom, the outcome of ill-luck

and hardship, that stamps itself as well upon things inanimate as animate. Their depressed appearance is not difficult to account for. Existence to them literally means all work and no play, the effect of which chronic condition of being is correctly defined in a well-known proverb. The enormous suburb in which they pass their lives only owns, beside the new People's Palace, three establishments providing evening entertainment for the general public—a theatre and two music-halls—probably because its population is too poor to support a greater number of pleasure-resorts. The gratuitous shows afforded to them by Whitechapel shop-windows are for the most part of an absolutely utilitarian character, neither ornamental nor amusing, and utterly unsuggestive of any ideas beyond those immediately associated with the objects they exhibit—chiefly “articles of strict necessity.” Nearly all the displays set forth in East End establishments are commonplace and dispiriting. Even the colours of the huge bottles adorning the chemists' shop-fronts seem faint and sickly, alike lacking in comforting depth and cheering lustrousness.

Trades connected with the liberal arts are almost unrepresented—at least in the retail line of business—throughout this district. During a long stroll up one side of the Whitechapel Road and down the other, I was unable to discover any shops specially affected to the sale of musical instruments or compositions, or of painting and drawing materials. On the southern side, not far from the City boundary, there is a small establishment in the window of which are displayed about a score of coloured prints and lithographs, cheaply framed, most of which

originally appeared in the Christmas or summer numbers of popular illustrated periodicals. It is noticeable that female beauty and country scenery are “to the front” in this humble art show.

Another establishment, bearing some distant relation to one of the plastic arts, was situated about a twelve-month ago at a street corner nearly opposite a democratic picture-shop, within a vigorous stone’s throw of the London Hospital. It is no exaggeration to say that the most remarkable waxworks of this or any other age were then on view in a western section of the Whitechapel Road. This amazing exhibition occupied the ground floor and cellarage of a frowsy two-storeyed house, the upper floor of which appeared to be unoccupied. And no wonder, for who would willingly live under the same roof with the ghastly dolls that tenanted the lower part of this sordid messuage? A penny was the fee for admission to the display, the attractions of which were incessantly proclaimed *urbi et orbi* by the stentorian voices of two curiously ill-favoured male attendants, while a slatternly, unkempt girl, as grimy as the most approved Old Master, sat at the receipt of custom hard by the entrance. When I visited them, the show-rooms were thronged with blowzy, bonnetless women, and unshaven, unwashed men, affording to more than one of the senses conclusive evidence that they had recently been somewhat assiduously engaged in “sampling” the wares of a neighbouring gin-shop. Squeezed in here and there among these miscellaneous adults, and eagerly striving to catch a glimpse of the hideous effigies lining either wall of the long, low room, dimly lighted by slender and tremulous jets of gas, were a few pallid, precocious children

whose language was no less “ painful, and frequent, and free ” than that of their elders. The show itself, however, despite its many repulsive characteristics, could not possibly lower *their* moral tone ; and yet it was unquestionably a “ penny dreadful ” of the most blood-curdling description, mainly consisting of long rows of vilely executed waxen figures and plaster busts, propped up, some upright, some askew, against either wall of the show-room, rigged out in the refuse of a Petticoat Lane old clothes shop, and professing (according to the half-penny catalogue) to be striking likenesses of all the most notorious homicides of modern times. From Palmer to Pranzini the collection claimed to be complete, and its serried ranks, whatever their artistic shortcomings might be—and in this respect I believe them to have been unrivalled — unquestionably teemed with the strangest of surprises, a few of which were ineffably comical. For instance, there was a deeply-pitted, broken-nosed, plaster-of-paris head, surmounted by a faded green hat, and issuing from a threadbare double-breasted jacket. It looked like a slovenly cast of some mutilated classical bust dressed up in modern “ slops ” by way of a mild joke, the contrast between its lifeless whiteness and shabby-genteel “ get-up ” being wildly ludicrous. In the catalogue, however, this outrageous anachronism was set down as the correct effigy of Eliza Webster, who, as an artless critic in my immediate vicinity suggested, while contemplating her astounding lineaments, “ must a' been a rum 'un to look at ” when alive, if she ever bore the least resemblance to her “ portrait-model.” The chief attraction of the show, as might have been expected

considering its locality, was a blood-boltered display of revolting figures, purporting to represent the victims of the Whitechapel murders, laid out on the floor, side by side, at the farther end of a darksome cellar connected with the ground-floor room by a rickety corkscrew staircase. These horrible objects were like nothing that ever lived or died. They could only be compared to the visionary offspring of an uncommonly severe nightmare—unearthly combinations of hideous waxen masks and shapeless bundles of rags. One of them was tightly swathed in a cermement of bright blue glazed calico, scored and blotched with dabs of red ochre, indicative of the unknown assassin's butcherly handiwork. The others were somewhat grotesquely arrayed in dark wrappers profusely stained with mimic gore. At the other end of the cellar, close to a flaring gaslight, were cooped up two melancholy freaks of Nature—a gray hen and a common or garden duck, each afflicted with an extra pair of legs. These, the only living things in the whole appalling collection of horrors, manifested a violent and resentful reluctance to display their deformities, in odd contrast to the glassy indifference to public curiosity characterising their wax and plaster neighbours. They evidently yearned for privacy; when dragged from retirement by any of their four legs, in order to be minutely inspected, they struggled strenuously, and gave utterance to indignant protests. Such, in the latter part of the year 1888, was one of the cheap entertainments provided by contemporary enterprise for the inhabitants of Whitechapel. It was open from an early hour of the forenoon until late at night, and was visited

by many hundreds of men, women, and children of the poorer classes daily. To what extent it may have influenced the East Enders deleteriously, by fostering a morbid interest in crime and criminals, can of course only be a matter of conjecture; but it seems a pity that such a debasing exhibition should ever have constituted one of the principal amusements available to the population of a poverty-stricken neighbourhood.

Careful investigation on either side of the Whitechapel Road is promptly and frequently rewarded by the discovery of local peculiarities in connection with shop-front displays. It is not often given to the West End *flâneur*, for instance, to see bottles of raspberry syrup, alternating with soda-water syphons, set out in the window of a tea and coffee shop, and conveying to the thirsty passer-by suggestions of refreshing beverages having nothing whatever in common with infusions of the Chinese leaf and the African berry. These liquid elements of combination, walled in by mighty slabs of cheap cake, warranted to generate a burning thirst at a penny a slice, are among the temptations of the East End "coffee palace." If it be true that demand creates supply, poverty must engender a devouring passion for unripe fruit in the breast of the impecunious working man and factory girl, to judge by the lavish provision of this forbidding comestible displayed throughout the highways and byways of Whitechapel. Enough sour apples and hard pears to meet the views of all the schoolboys in Christendom are proffered for sale in the Whitechapel Road alone, without taking into account the contents of the fruit-stalls that line the pavements

of many a minor street in its vicinity. Indulgence in pot-herbs would also seem to go hand in hand with straitened means, for herbalists evidently do a brisk and lucrative trade in the East End, as is demonstrated by the comparative handsomeness of their retail establishments. There is a shop of this kind near the "Vine Tavern"—a queer old wooden hostelry, standing alone on the verge of the broad *trottoir*, some twenty yards distant from the line of house-fronts, which not only advertises every known variety of aromatic and medicinal herb, but keeps a "Botanic Practitioner" (whatever that may be) on the premises, and pledges itself to relieve toothache "in half-a-minute; no Cure, no Pay."

Close to this emporium, which gives out a pleasant fragrance, is another Whitechapel specialty in the way of retail trade, to wit, a stall exclusively consecrated to the sale of pot-lids. What can be the use of a pot-lid, unaccompanied by its parent pot, and why anybody should purchase an orphan pot-lid, which is not in itself either decorative or soothing, are questions calculated to bewilder the liveliest imagination and perplex the most speculative intellect. Cutlers' shops abound in the main artery of the East End, and display vast numbers of horribly suggestive knives, any one of which would figure appropriately as a *pièce justificative* in a murder trial. They may be harmless implements of some useful and commonplace trade or handicraft; but to the uninstructed eye they present a truculent and bloodthirsty aspect. A leading feature of the hosiers' shop-windows in Whitechapel is the

gorgeous character of their cheap made-up neckties, executed in the gaudiest combinations of "sporting" colours, copied presumably from the racing jackets of popular jockeys—orange-yellow and grass-green, purple and pink, Prussian blue and bright scarlet. It is worthy of remark that cravats of less conspicuous hue and pattern, apparently identical with those for which three and sixpence is charged in West End shops, are sold in Whitechapel for a shilling apiece. Inexpensive splendour, as far as ties, throat-wrappers, and pocket-handkerchiefs are concerned, seems to be the ruling foible of the youthful East Ender, who, as I have been assured, likes his colours "gay, and plenty of 'em." In this barbaric taste, or lack of taste, he is sedulously encouraged by local enterprise, which lends itself to manufacturing, for his express delectation, florid articles of wear, a casual glance at which would cause any confirmed æsthetic to curl up in an artistic agony, racked by horrid throes of "low-toned" consternation and discomfiture.

The shortest way from Whitechapel Road to the permanent open-air market held in Wentworth Street passes in front of the decorative porch and fountain of St. Jude and the archway leading to the peaceful stone oasis on which stands Toynbee Hall, one of the many civilising institutions established in the East End of London by enlightened benevolence. In this particular neighbourhood, formerly a network of filthy slums denized by thieves, "fences," and fallen women, handsome and commodious model lodging-houses and workmen's homes have recently been erected, and broad,

straight streets have advantageously replaced the narrow tortuous alleys, a few squalid odds and ends of which still withstand the march of improvement. One side of Wentworth Street itself consists of new, solidly-built houses, the ground floors of which, however, let out in shops to petty retailers of Polish and German extraction, already show signs of deterioration, whilst the miserable tenements opposite offer a saddening spectacle of dirt and decay. Between them both is set out, higgledy-piggledy, an array of modern stalls, displaying certain Whitechapel food-staples. Amongst them figure the ubiquitous unripe fruit, and many of the coarser varieties of sea-fish, some doubtfully fried, some questionably fresh, and some indisputably dried. Branching out from the northern side of this busy and grimy, but by no means unpicturesque thoroughfare, are two or three of those gloomy courts, terminating in *culs-de-sac*, and forlorn of gas lamps, which seem predestined to become the scenes of crime. I was informed that the courts in question were, in every essential respect, exactly similar to those in which more than one of the Whitechapel murders had been committed.

Among the Wentworth Street shop-fronts are two that may confidently challenge competition as metropolitan curiosities. One belongs to a tea-shop, and displays a few loose heaps of faded tea-leaves, something like sun-baked molecasts, into which are carelessly thrust half-a-dozen fly-blown labels, partly sallow with age, partly gray with dirt. These mounds of "sweepings" are dimly visible through window panes, the inner sur-

face of which has been rendered semi-opaque by the dust of ages. Just opposite is an even more archaic grocer's *étalage*, exhibiting a murky show of fossil prunes, fragments of prehistoric candied fruits, tertiary fancy biscuits, and dirty trays full of dreadful nondescript scraps, making unseemly pretence to have been eatable at about the Lacustrine period of unwritten human history. Seen from the street, all the cakes and comfits of this weird, mysterious grocery store look as if they had been turned to stone æons ago, and were being now offered for sale as petrified relics of a primeval and rudimentary civilisation. The western end of Wentworth Street is crossed by an unprepossessing thoroughfare, in which the irrepressible gherkin, pickled salt or sour according to taste, and wallowing in its own acrid liquor by the tubful, predominates over all other edible articles of commerce, in which this street appears exclusively to deal. Near the spot at which it issues into Whitechapel Road, and within hail of an outlying cabstand which marks the confines of Aldgate, is a long row of butchers' stalls, the *avant-garde* of an equally long range of slaughter-houses. These stalls are chiefly remarkable for their curious assortments of objects culled from the internal arrangements of those domesticated animals which supply us with sirloins of beef, saddles of mutton, and loins of pork in the ordinary way of business, but which obviously furnish forth to the East Ender a good many organic substances, convertible into comestibles, with which the West Ender is altogether unfamiliar.

Anybody endowed with an inquiring turn of mind

—let us say, the “intelligent foreigner” or “observant aborigine”—who may be desirous to learn what London food-purveyors (an appropriate title for whom would be “Ministers to the Interior”) can do in the way of providing their customers with superb vivers at the Christmas season, should take a stroll through the chief thoroughfares of the City about noonday during the third week of December, when business of every calibre, from the confidential bargain involving millions to the frank penny transaction, is at its briskest. It is in the City that the best of everything to eat and drink produced all over the world is daily bought and sold, the greater part to be conveyed with all possible despatch to other metropolitan regions, the lesser to be still more promptly consumed *in loco*. Besides the vast provision made daily for London’s unappeasable appetite in the mighty meat, poultry, and fish markets of the East Central District, each railway station therein, whether belonging to the subterranean or to the superficial system of communications, is surrounded by a cluster of shops teeming with edibles of infinite variety, excellent quality, and attractive appearance. These establishments do a tremendous afternoon trade with all sorts and conditions of City men, on their way “from labour to refreshment” after having pursued the evasive “oof-bird” with more or less success, each for his appointed number of hours. “Tom Tiddler’s Ground,” inconveniently thronged by snappers-up of considered and unconsidered trifles between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., is the scene early every evening of an exodus *en masse*. Its entire floating population, to be

reckoned by the hundred thousand, streams away from it in every direction indicated by the points of the compass, leaving its streets to the police, its offices and business emporia to housekeepers and caretakers. These nightly emigrants from the City constitute the *clientèle* of the huge provision-shops that display their tempting wares in the immediate vicinity of the different railway stations, as well as at other points of vantage for the retailer of comestibles. Innumerable merchants and brokers, bankers and commission-agents, pause for a few minutes in order to buy fish and poultry, game and fruit, before making their periodical descent into the bowels of the earth *en route* for Brompton or Tyburnia, Regent's Park or Hampstead, Brixton or Clapham. Moreover, the very pick of all the chief home and foreign markets is gathered together for submission to their approval within a stone's-throw of their counting-houses or bureaux ; for City men will have the best of everything, and will not put up with extortionate overcharges ; wherefore, being good judges of what is what and prompt paymasters to boot, they uniformly succeed in getting their own way in both respects. Furthermore, their employés of every class benefit by their sound judgment in the great question of supply, as well as by their settled resolve not to be imposed upon. At the magnificent provision stores to which I refer, not only delicacies and "primeurs" are procurable at comparatively moderate prices, but excellent food of the less expensive kinds is to the fore in surprising abundance. The shows of butcher's meat, cheap poultry, fresh and cured fish, fruit, bacon, cheese,

butter, hams, brawn, and dainty sausages, slightly flushed by a subcutaneous infusion of ruddy tomato juice, are rife with opportune temptation to legions of City clerks, married and single, who, night after night, carry off enormous quantities of these good things to the suburbs.

Turning from these splendid and comprehensive food-emporiums—creations of our metropolitan railway systems—to establishments of a similar character situate in the chief business thoroughfares of the City, I cannot forbear remarking that I have been struck by certain specialities, in connection with particular streets, as surpassing in size and general attractiveness articles of a similar class displayed in any other part of London. Bloaters, for instance, would seem to run larger and portlier in Bishopsgate Street than they do elsewhere. Not even in Thames Street, which prides itself on the dimensions of its bloaters, is this succulent fish so sleek, corpulent, and lengthy as he is in the thoroughfare to which I allude—likewise a notable repository of kippers so colossal that they impress one as being the result of some ingenious forcing process. There are other objects in that unpretending *étagage*—cunning contrasts of dark-red smoked salmon and rich-brown cured cod-roes, tinted in gradation of shades like a carefully coloured meerschaum—which reward contemplation, and might justify a gastronome in undertaking a pious pilgrimage to the Prelate's Portal. The biggest hot-house grapes to be seen in London, luscious black and pale green muscatel lying side by side in huge clusters, the external lustre of their juicy globes overcast here

and there by slight clouds of velvety bloom, are another speciality of Bishopsgate Street, which, like its continuation, Gracechurch Street, achieves high distinction in connection with choice and costly fruits, of tropical as well as of native growth. It is also truly great in respect to its preparations of pig, enwreathed and studded with leaves and berries of artificial holly, their gay greens and reds somewhat pertly setting off the sad smile of the sallow Bath chap and the gleaming pallor of sausage triplets, calmly reposing in cream-coloured cardboard caskets labelled "One Shilling," and set out on a raised platform of their own, standing forth in bold relief from a massive background of highly-burnished hams.

For trophies of rich and savoury dainties, however—not to be excelled even in the *charcuteries* of Paris or in the *Delikatessen-Handlungen* of Berlin—Leadenhall Street and the Poultry may fairly claim to "annex the Abernethy." In some of these establishments are displayed constructive and decorative marvels in the way of Christmas cheer. In one of these clever combinations I once saw two ox-tongues, springing upwards from a thick bed of glazed brawn, figure as a pair of brilliantly polished horns, the tips of which were linked together by a shining evergreen garland. This stately "piece" was flanked on either side by huge boars' heads, fantastically inlaid with "strange devices" in high colour, the materials used for ornamentation being apparently the purest of wax, and refined sugar of exceptionally close texture. Extremely ornate specimens of this "tam cari capit is" were exhibited in the windows

of one famous restaurant, which had brought out a seasonable novelty in the shape of tiny sounders' heads, no less lavishly adorned with mimic flowers and imaginary gauds than those of their aprine papas, but much sweeter in expression. Peculiarly appropriate to the Poultry are the comely hen-pheasants, partridges, and grouse, steadfastly sitting on nests of pie, and manifestly resolved to hatch something gamey, or moult in the attempt. Among the bright-eyed birds of glossy plumage garnishing the varnished brown roofs of truffled pasties, and symbolising the toothsome substances encrusted beneath them, one looks in vain for that lordly fowl, the peacock "in his pride," *facile princeps* of Christmas dainties "in the saintly days of yore :" there is, seemingly, no demand for "pâté de paon à la Périgord" among contemporary City gourmets. On the other hand, turkeys and geese, unembalmed in amber jelly and golden paste, and laid out in rows with dreadfully relaxed throats, unclad save in their "native worth and honour," enjoy undiminished popularity to the eastward of Temple Bar. Within the precincts of Leadenhall alone, uncounted thousands of these pre-eminently bronchial birds dangle or sprawl during the Christmas week, their plump breasts bared to the winter wind, as though all the gobblers and cacklers of Christendom, simultaneously doomed to die, had agreed, prior to their decease, to meet at a mortuary rendezvous in the chief market of the City. "Surely," I observed to a burly salesman, while contemplating this stupendous gathering of dead poultry with undisguised amazement, "here are turkeys and

geese enough to provision the whole of the United Kingdom for a week." "Lor bless yer, no!" was the reply. "Why, London eats 'em all up in a day, and wouldn't think nothen on it if they was five times as many!" There are other memorable sights besides the great turkey and goose show to be seen at Christmastide between Leadenhall and Lime Streets; to wit, huge chests full of wild fowl—mallard, teal, and widgeon—and big baskets bursting with pigeons, piled up on the foot-paths, and converting the narrow roadways into labyrinths of packing-cases; grand deer, hung up by their heels, some gray, some tawny, and for the most part hailing from far-distant lands; superb shows of Australian mutton and New Zealand lamb, as well as of home-fattened prize beef, exhibiting tiny islands of ruddy meat enveloped in vast oceans of yellow suet. Butchers and poulters alike deck their wares out gaily with rosettes and streamers of coquettish multi-coloured ribbon, calm evergreen festoons, and self-assertive sprigs of holly. When all these arrangements of still life and contrasts of hue are brilliantly illuminated after dark, the *coup d'œil* they present is one that, for splendour and interest, can scarcely be equalled in any other European capital.

The open-air trade carried on in the City streets is manifold and vivacious, a penny being the established commercial unit of price for every imaginable article sold and bought *al fresco*. How some of these commodities can be produced, let alone retailed at a profit, for the money, is one of those problems which impress the casual observer as insoluble. There is scarcely a

main thoroughfare between Ludgate Hill and Aldgate in which one may not, for the twelfth part of a shilling, purchase a dice-box and cast of dice, a pack of playing-cards, or a cribbage-board with its due complement of pegs. An expenditure of threepence will thus enable the pride of the Sunday-school to equip himself with a full suit, so to speak, of gambling paraphernalia. For the future no restriction, save one of abstract morality, need "give pause" to that hopeful youth on the road to ruin. The majority of the open-air "bargains" hawked indefatigably on the sidewalks of Cheapside, Cornhill, and Gracechurch Street are, however, fortunately quite innocuous to the moral sense. Comic "penn'orths" predominate; the parachute *à la* Baldwin, by which a penny doll from an adjacent tray can be launched into space from a nursery window, and achieve a thrilling aërial descent into the back garden; bland Mikadoes and smirking Japanese ladies "from the tea-house," who, being wound up somewhere in the abdominal region, flutter fans and wag heads spasmodically; bladder babies, inflated to a condition of revolting chubbiness, and displaying a skyward tendency attributable to the circumstance that they are lighter than the air in which they float and hover; miniature acrobats, perfect paragons of suppleness and distortive resource; "Dear little dolls," thus caressingly proclaimed by their vendor, but which might be more appropriately described as "cheap little dolls." These quaint toys compete for public favour with sets of shirt-studs, sleeve-links, breast-pins, rings, diaries, jumping frogs and bilboquets, all at the uniform price of one penny.

Turning from the kerbstone displays to those facing them in the shop-windows on the opposite side of the pavement, one cannot but be pleasurabley impressed by the multitude of tasteful trifles and artistic novelties offered for sale in the City of London. As might be expected, the newest inventions in the way of Christmas and New Year greetings are conspicuous, year after year, in certain Cheapside shops. Humour is not lacking to some of the drawings and legends that have claimed at different times to be symbolical of seasonable salutation, as, for instance, a delicate sketch in colour of several pairs of "lively fleas," rampaging on a strip of fleecy Witney blanketing; a cleverly written auctioneer's advertisement, setting forth the charms of conviviality; and a string of jesting verses, tacked on to a genuine hook and eye. In 1888, the prettiest missive of Christmas congratulation, however—and the costliest, was shown in a silversmith's window. It was a *plaque* of oxidised silver, framed in pale blue plush, and displaying a peal of ringing Christmas bells in low relief, executed with admirable freedom and vigour. Hard by this charming work of art were ranged several rows of diminutive cups, elaborately embossed, and enigmatically labelled "Thistle Tots." What, I would ask, is a "tot," and how connected with the favourite provender of the humble but persistent jackass? One of the newest "combinations" (*sic*) exhibited that year in the City was a silver match-box, that contained a circular repository for sovereigns, a square niche for postage-stamps, a pencil-case, and a toothpick: As an instance of the fervency just then

characterising trade competition, I may mention that this ingenious compendium of conveniences was cheaper by sixpence at one end of Cheapside than at the other. A second "combination" worthy of mention was a morocco jewel-casket lined with silk, in the central compartment of which nestled a dainty little silver watch. Among the other complex articles "strongly recommended" as Christmas presents, were umbrellas, in the round heads of which lurked powder-puffs, scent-bottles, and mysterious cosmetics; "proverbial" matchboxes, teeming with offence to any one imprudent enough to ask their owner for a light; other matchboxes, burdened with a "divided duty," being arranged to serve as whist-markers; baskets of mimic fruits, executed in soap, that reminded one, in form, colour, and fragrance, of the imitative ices for which Naples is justly famous. Oddly enough, pears were not among the saponaceous fruits grouped in these elegant little panniers.

From the frequent recurrence of music-shops in all the arterial streets converging to the heart of civic London, which I take to be the Mansion House, it may be assumed that City men, as a rule, are deeply devoted to the cult of Polyhymnia, and that melody, when embodied in a comic song with a grotesque title-page, never appeals to their musical sensibilities in vain. They also appear, if shop-window evidence may be accepted as conclusive, to be little short of insatiate with respect to theatrical photographs, clever water-colours and etchings, cheap jewellery, bargains in *bric-à-brac*, silken socks and body garments, costly canes, shell-fish of the nobler varieties, cigars and wooden pipes, ornate neck-

ties, chronometers, and fancy cutlery. The demand for these articles in the City, judging by the supply of them there visible to the naked eye, must be incessant, vehement, and extravagant to the verge of recklessness. On the whole, the displays of City shop-windows may be correctly characterised in one brief sentence : " Cheap, good, handsome, and up to date."

## THE SHIRT-COLLAR CULT.

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IN all likelihood the copious, not to say redundant, shirt-collars sported by the sad sea wave and at race meetings by Ethiopian minstrels of the Anglican variety would—were one curiously to investigate the original causes of their being—prove to be outward and visible signs of the inward and passionate predilection entertained by the unsophisticated black man for clean, showy, and severely “got-up” linen. It is a fact, well known to African travellers, that a stiff, snowy shirt-front soothes the savage breast even more effectively than music, and that the untutored Borioboolan’s spirits rise appreciably when his sable throat is encircled by the dazzling and rigid instrument of torture upon which our German kinsmen, early in the present century, bestowed the appropriate title of “parricide.” Striking contrasts of colour are peculiarly attractive to the eye of the primitive negro, and civilisation does not, at least in this particular respect, sensibly alter the taste of the typical “man and brother.” His love for spotless “plastrons” and immaculate collars may be satisfactorily accounted for by this idiosyncrasy; for no more absolute contrast can be conceived by the

liveliest imagination than that afforded by the immediate juxtaposition of a white shirt and an ebony skin. Of how steadfast a character is the true-born Ethiop's penchant for this antithesis at the present day may be gathered from an incident that took place some months ago in a village of the Congo region, on the occasion of the return thither of a young African Prince, long absent from his native country.

It appears that the eldest son of a local monarch, King Mambuko by name, had been induced to visit Europe by one Captain Van de Velde, a Belgian officer employed in the work of exploration undertaken in Congo Land under the auspices of Leopold II. A few years had elapsed since Van de Velde, recalled from Africa by his Government, took young Sakala, heir-apparent to the Mambuko realm, home with him, brought the lad up carefully and kindly in his own family, and made him acquainted with the manifold blessings of civilisation—among them shirt-collars and boots. In due course of time Prince Sakala was sent to a public school, where he learned to speak French and English with fluency and correctness. Subsequently he received special instruction, practical as well as theoretical, in several handicrafts. Meanwhile he had entirely foregone the sumptuary fashions of the simple barbarian, "whose untutored mind," according to an eminent American humourist, "clothes him in front, but leaves him bare behind." Sakala readily complied with the behests of Western culture, which enjoined that he should wear broadcloth and fine linen, sedulously polished boots, and a glossy hat as black as

his own tropical complexion. Thus decorously attired, an adept in half-a-dozen useful callings, and able to express himself freely in the language of diplomacy, as well as in the idiom of commerce, King Mambuko's son and heir grew up to man's estate, having undergone a considerable metamorphosis from the ignorant, unclothed child of nature whom Van de Velde had brought from the wilds of Africa to the domain of the Tame Lion, and had made the subject of benevolent and highly interesting experiment. All was changed in Prince Sakala, indeed, except his colour, the only national characteristic distinguishing him to the casual observer from any of the "braves Belges" who, in his reformed condition, had become his daily associates.

Towards the close of last October Captain Van de Velde was appointed to the command of the military expedition despatched to Stanley Falls by order of King Leopold. It seems that Sakala's arduous studies of the French and English languages had not effaced his own native tongue from his memory; so his generous protector resolved to take the accomplished young negro out to the Congo with him in the character of interpreter to the new mission. Soon after Van de Velde's arrival in Africa the report reached King Mambuko's capital that the "white men," accompanied by Sakala, were on their way thither from the coast. When this rumour received positive confirmation from the actual approach of the expedition, all the inhabitants of the village assembled upon a large open space fronting Mambuko's house. Presently Captain Van de Velde made his appearance on the scene of this great gather-

ing, alone. He advanced to within a few yards of the Royal abode, and sat down on the ground, speaking no word. Immediately the negroes formed a circle round him, and stood expectant, silently awaiting the advent of their long-lost Prince.

All at once a loud cry arose from the anxious throng, as a body of negroes, laden with the baggage of the expedition, came in sight, followed by Sakala, clad from head to foot in European garb, and carrying a gun upon his shoulder. Straightway his mother, with all the women of the village in her wake, uttering strange cries of welcome, and striking their open mouths with the palms of their hands, rushed towards him and clasped him in her arms. Having embraced her beloved truant to her heart's content, she led him to his Royal father. Mambuko, after gazing upon his son for a few seconds with paternal pride and fondness, burst into tears, ejaculating, "Mbote, mbote!"—it is good—and bestowed a grateful handgrip on Captain Van de Velde, to whose beneficence he naturally attributed the splendour of civilisation characterising Sakala's attire and general aspect. The young Prince then took his father's hand respectfully, and sate down by him on the ground, at a deferential distance from the Belgian officer, to whose kindness he was so deeply indebted. Upon this Mambuko's subjects gave vent to their loyal exhilaration by vociferous shouts and salvoes of musketry.

As soon as the vehemence of popular rejoicing had somewhat abated, Sakala, with praiseworthy fortitude, went through the tiresome ceremonial of shaking hands with all the members of the Royal family, his relatives,

some sixty in number ; having fulfilled which important duty he took his place, the cynosure of all surrounding eyes, in the centre of a circle of privileged personages, and proceeded to narrate his manifold adventures in parts beyond the sea. His kinsmen and friends clustered round him, lost in admiration of his superb garments, but chiefly moved to rapture by the charms of his beautiful shirt-collar, starched to the consistency of cardboard, and white as newly-drifted snow. Upon this fascinating object, and upon his scarcely less entrancing boots, they could not weary of gazing ; and it may fairly be presumed that the gorgeous appearance of Prince Sakala on the occasion referred to rendered good solid service to the dynastic interests of the House of Mambuko.

Celebrities of Heathenesse, returning to the locality of their customary sojourn after a protracted absence therefrom, cannot always count upon so cordial and sympathetic a reception as that accorded to Prince Sakala in his Congo home, especially if they bring with them startling innovations in costume or manners. When the genial Bishop of Rum-ti-foo, at the close of a lengthy visit to England, during which he had acquired some proficiency in the exercises of the ballet, was about to revert to his diocese, some one who had seen him perform several difficult choregraphic feats is recorded as having advised him to hop ashore on one foot, holding up the other with his hand, upon his arrival at the island. His lordship's counsellor considered it probable that this vivacious display of agility on the right reverend gentleman's part would prove a

source of unmixed gratification to his faithful flock. The Bishop, however, was too accurately acquainted with the likes and dislikes of the wayward barbarians committed to his spiritual charge to risk forfeiting their esteem by any such unseemly antic as that suggested to him, and sagaciously observed : "The islanders of Rum-ti-foo Are well-conducted people, who Behave themselves as such ; But if they saw their Bishop land, His foot supported in his hand, The joke they wouldn't understand ; 'Twould pain them very much ! "

Max Adeler, too, in one of his admirable papers embodying the thrilling experiences of an American traveller in barbarous countries, describes the dismal fate that befell certain too ambitious savages who, having surprised and slain a large party of European tourists, possessed themselves of their victims' apparel, and were prompted by an overweening conceit to attempt to set new fashions, based upon their booty, to their eminently conservative fellow-tribesmen. Incongruously arrayed in bodices and trousers, waistcoats and flowing skirts, some wearing silk stockings on their arms, others striding proudly along with ladies' bonnets tied round their waists and dainty kid-boots suspended from their necks, they marched into their native village with a haughty assumption of superiority which at once aroused the indignation of the inhabitants, instead of eliciting their admiration. These latter, fiercely intolerant of innovation, and unable to put up with the fantastic airs and graces of their presumptuous compatriots, rose upon them without a moment's hesitation, put them to death with tortures of hideous ingenuity,

and conclusively recorded the community's disapproval of their revolutionary conduct by cooking and eating them. It was well for Prince Sakala, when he returned to his native village dressed "up to the nines" in the latest Belgian fashions, that his father's subjects took a favourable view of his "new departure" in the way of costume, instead of resenting it with an unreasoning violence that might have been fraught with serious inconvenience to him. As a matter of fact, their hearts went out to his shirt-collar—perhaps a paper one—and they loved him, not "for the dangers he had passed," but for the impress of European smartness bestowed upon him by that dazzling article of wear.

## THE GIPSY KING.

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THERE must be something intrinsically exhilarating in the position of a ruler over the Rommany, judging by the words of a song that attained considerable popularity in this country some thirty years ago, each verse of which concluded with the exultant burden, “For I am a Gipsy King, ha! ha!” It could not but be manifest to the dullest hearer of this joyous lay that the supposititious monarch for whom it was composed was moved to give vent to his inward contentment by outbursts of glad laughter, whenever he reflected upon the pleasures and privileges accruing to him from his rank in the larger Bohemia. To reign over this vast realm, with a jurisdiction extending to every country in Christendom and Paynimland, it was necessary that he should have been endowed by nature with a deep bass voice—the possession of which, from a lyrical point of view, implies a convivial spirit in its proprietor—as well as with indomitable cheerfulness of disposition and a marked tendency to rollick. The Gipsy King of the concert-room—he who brought abundant grist to the mill of the London music-seller, and was a steady source of income to the British basso profondo

—levied alimentary taxes upon the squire's preserves and the farmer's hencoops, preferring the precarious rabbit and the incidental pullet to the uneventful steak and chop resulting from an ordinary commercial transaction. His palace was a covered donkey-cart by day and a light tent by night; his "pitch," a dry, sandy spot among the gorse and heather, selected—with an eye to the habits of the furred and feathered contributors to his larder—in convenient proximity to a broad turnip-field and a wide stretch of high covert. Among his subjects were swarthy youths, equally adroit in the tinkering of an infirm kettle, the twisting of a wire snare, and the weaving of those symmetrical meshes which the professional poacher considers peculiarly efficacious for the bloodless capture of reposeful partridges. His sway was also owned by picturesque matrons and dark-eyed lasses, adepts in the science of palmistry, on confidential terms with the stars, and gifted with the power alike of peering into the past and foretelling the future.

The Gipsy King was free, predatory, and hospitable; to collect his revenues in kind was his "delight, Of a shiny night, In the season of the year." Of the "kippur" and the village constable, who respectively disputed his sylvan jurisdiction and his antique claim to be regarded as a chartered "snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," he fought judiciously shy; he was expert in every kind of unobtrusive sport, and in the preparation of savoury messes that never cost him or his lieges a single penny of outlay. He was an interesting nomad, here to-day and gone to-morrow, im-

pressing himself upon the rural memory by mysterious feats of tribute-gathering, executed during the hours of darkness, with fatal results to many a pampered duck and cherished goose, and by still more occult daylight achievements in the way of divination and prediction. His must have been a happy life, for he wandered whithersoever his fancy led him, took toll of his fellow-men, whether they were willing to pay it or not, was unencumbered by constitutional responsibilities, spent the greater part of his time in unsophisticated intercourse with nature, was the jovial comrade of his subjects as well as their absolute ruler, ate and drank of the best at a mere nominal cost, and, as has already been pointed out, was officially liable at a moment's notice to break out into strains of mirthful minstrelsy.

It would appear that the Royal office formerly held by this hilarious potentate has lately fallen vacant, or that its present occupant is harassed by some doubts as to the legitimacy of his claim to reign over the "wandering people"; for a Rommany Rye of the coppersmith persuasion, calling himself "George Raphael the First, King of the Gipsies," some time ago addressed a petition to the Emperor Francis Joseph, imploring his Imperial-Royal Majesty to grant him the title of "King of the descendants of Pharaoh." The author of this remarkable supplication advanced the following grounds for his request, which he presented to the Emperor-King with conspicuous humility, figuratively "kneeling at His Majesty's throne." The sons of Pharaoh in Austria-Hungary, he averred, meander about the common Fatherland. They recognise no law.

They will not work, but stray from village to village under assumed names. George Raphael I., as the direct descendant of Pharaoh, wished to subjugate them, to convert them into loyal subjects of their native country, and to compel or persuade them to volunteer their services for the Imperial-Kingly Army. He proposed, if the desired recognition of his sovereignty should be accorded to him, and if he were invested with Royal authority by the Monarch of the land, to blend his gipsy-subjects with the "honest" population of the Dual Realm—a proposition the terms of which were not over-flattering to the stray human sheep whom George Raphael desired to gather into the loyal fold.

The aspiring coppersmith and "inhabitant of the First Circumscription of Jaszbereny"—it was thus that he signed his petition to the Hapsburg—is evidently well acquainted with the "tricks and manners" of his tawny brethren, the "Sons of Pharaoh." They are born rovers, averse to settling in any particular place; they strongly object to taxation; if there is one fixed occupation more repugnant to them than another it is that of carrying fire-arms, except in their poaching capacity. However desirous Franz Josef I. might be to correct these irregularities in his gipsy lieges, and to draft a certain percentage of them into the ranks of his army, it seemed scarcely likely that he would delegate any portion of his sovereign authority to a local Gipsy King, or consent to the establishment of an "imperium in imperio" on Austro-Hungarian soil. Perhaps George Raphael, if all he wanted was a purely honorific title, calculated to heighten his prestige among

the Rommany of the Dual Realm, would have done better to apply to the Khedive, who rules the dominion of the Pharaohs by inheritance, though he prefers no claim whatsoever, as did the ambitious coppersmith, to be a descendant of the ancient Egyptian Kings. Tewfik Pasha, so far as is generally known, has no pretension to be "King of the Children of Pharaoh." He is the most amiable and easy-going of Monarchs, and probably would be glad to oblige any properly-qualified person by granting him the use of that title—say for the term of his natural life—so far as such a conferment might lie within the vice-regal attributes of the present ruler of Egypt, himself a vassal of the supreme Khalifeh. It would cost the Viceroy nothing but a sheet of paper and a penful of ink to nominate George Raphael I. King of all the descendants of Pharaoh, now scattered about in various parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, instead of restricting his rule—as Francis Joseph could not but have done, had he acceded to the coppersmith's request—to those within the territorial limits of "Austria-Hungary."

In the less civilised provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire gipsies are more numerous, in proportion to the Christian subjects of the Crown, than they are in any other European country, with the solitary exception of Roumania. There are some thousands of them in Russia, for the most part tinkers, shoeing-smiths, vocalists, fortune-tellers, and horse-stealers; but there, as in the United Kingdom, they are comparatively few and far between, whilst in Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia, the Banat, and the Southern Slavonic regions, "protected"

and otherwise, they abound. Strange to say, the gipsy element is by no means conspicuous in Bohemia, the land from which they take the name by which they are still generally described throughout France.

All the tribes making up the Rommany nation, wherever found, display certain identical characteristics, and speak the same language, an Oriental tongue about the origin and history of which philologists have been at odds for centuries past. Gipsies, as a rule, are unbelievers in any revealed religion ; their faith in the extra-natural, when they have any, generally expresses itself in abject superstition. They are intensely clannish, and rarely mate with persons alien to them in race. Mixed marriages, indeed, are a special object of reprobation to them ; those of their own people who contract such alliances they unhesitatingly cast out and taboo ; and they can seldom be persuaded to admit any outsider to their tribal privileges, although they have been frequently known to adopt and bring up as gipsies the children of Christian parents, when stolen in the ordinary way of business. They are a lawless crew, ugly customers if dealt with roughly, and exceedingly revengeful. Their rancorousness was strikingly exemplified in the case of Dr. Middleton, who shot a Tsigan thief and would-be murderer at Cordova in self-defence, and was subsequently dogged through Europe to this country by some of the dead gitano's fellow-tribesmen, bent upon taking a life for a life.

Musical and predatory gifts are alike theirs. According to an old Czechish proverb current in all Slav dialects, including Russian, Servian, and

Dalmatian, "Every Tsigan is born a fiddler or a thief ; most of them both." Even these aliens, however, are not incapable of adapting their bread-earning pursuits to local standards of civilisation. The Austrian, Hungarian, and Servian gipsy, for instance, picks up a living, as a rule, by practising some sort of primitive handicraft, generally in connection with metal-work ; whereas the Polish, Roumanian, and Russian Tsigan depends chiefly upon music and petty larceny for his livelihood. All the Dacian "laotari," or minstrels, are gipsies, and among them, as well as among the Zigeuners in Russia, may be found singers and instrumentalists of extraordinary talent. Taking them "for all in all," the "children of Pharaoh" are the pariahs of Europe, and few who know them well would have envied George Raphael his subjects, had his humble petition found favour with the Emperor-King.

## A FAVOURED FLUTTERER.

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IT is the proud privilege of the bachelor curate to occupy an altogether exceptional position in British society. His relations with the fair sex are more intimate and confidential than those of the layman. All manner of opportunities for safe and comfortable flirtation offer themselves to him in the ordinary course of his professional vocations, and it is but rarely that he is held responsible, by parents and guardians, for trifling with the affections of his female parishioners. An entanglement with a curate is an almost inevitable episode of unsophisticated and susceptible girlhood. In nine cases out of ten it is brief and unimportant. The clerical "detrimental" is, as a rule, easily to be dealt with by a romantic young lady's natural protectors. From a pecuniary point of view, he is seldom eligible as a son-in-law. His tenure of a sacred office renders it incumbent upon him to set an example of self-sacrifice to his fellow competitors in the matrimonial market, by subordinating passion to duty, and by proving himself capable of sublime resignation beneath the pressure of heavy disappointment. Under the cover of his spiritual counsellorship he may practise as a general

lover without incurring the reprobation that is certain to fall upon a military, legal, or medical flirt who presumes to pay court to half-a-dozen damsels at a time.

Without being exactly a chartered libertine, he may be said to enjoy a prescriptive right to trespass upon family home preserves. Dorcas societies cleave to him, and he is the *primum mobile* of district-visiting. Picnics, garden-parties, and afternoon teas claim him for their own. He is equally available for croquet and charity, for lawn-tennis and the exposition of dogma. *Pater-familias*, more especially in the country, is apt to regard him as a harmless, necessary companion to the ladies of his family, and offers no objection to the frequency of his visits, upon the understanding, tacitly recognised by all parties concerned in its observance, that "there is to be no nonsense between the parson and the girls." Down to the point of serious love-making with a view towards ultimate matrimony, the curate is permitted to share unrestrictedly the comforts and pleasures of many an opulent British household. He may even be petted to a certain extent, without compromise to matron or maiden. For him alone, of all celibate male acquaintances, may with impunity the fluffy comforter be knitted or the ornate slipper be embroidered. If he be comely and sentimental he can hardly fail to develop the industrial instincts of his female admirers in the direction of worked bookmarkers and illuminated texts, wherewith to decorate his modest lodging. The acknowledged favourite of the fair, his lot should, indeed, be a happy one. All he has to do if he would preserve his

popularity is carefully to abstain from being particular in his attentions to any one of his gentle votaries. It may be, of course, that in the exclusive occupancy of a single loving heart he will find compensation for the sudden extinction of the mild hero-worship previously rendered to him by a plurality of devotees. Having fixed his choice, he should at least adhere to it; for, once solemnly affianced, a fickle curate can hope for no mercy from the society that was complacently tolerant of his volatility, so long as he remained unpledged to wed.

The reverend defendant in an action for breach of promise, the trial of which was concluded at the Warwick Assizes not long ago, was a melancholy illustration of the perils to which an amative but changeful young curate exposes himself by entering into a formal engagement with one lady, before deeming it necessary to restrain his constitutional and professional capacities for adoring the sex in general. This "gallant, gay Lutherian," to borrow a happy epithet from Mrs. Malaprop's vocabulary, not only committed the characteristic indiscretion of plighting his troth, some two years ago, to a susceptible provincial spinster, at a time when he was already betrothed to another young lady, but subsequently aggravated the embarrassments of his complicated position by writing to her several hundred love-letters, the least tenderly worded of which was thickly enough larded with terms of endearment to leave no doubts on the minds of a British jury as to the nature of his "intentions." Having thus imprudently covered nearly three miles of note-paper with the

liveliest assurances of his affection, this volatile ecclesiastic made the acquaintance, at Leamington, of a third young lady, whom he found in every way preferable to either of his previous *fiancées*; whereupon, without the slightest provocation on the part of his second love, he gave her to understand that he considered his engagement to her at an end by the simple but conclusive method of returning to her all the gifts she had bestowed upon him since she consented to become his bride. Unfortunately for him, the lady, though an orphan, was no chicken, but a person of mature age, high spirit, and considerable resolution. She had loved her fickle suitor long and well; and in proportion to the depth of the affection she had borne him during an engagement far too protracted to meet her views, was the vehemence of her resentment when she became aware that he had transferred his homage to the shrine of another. Female wrath, especially when prompted by the “*spretæ injuriæ formæ*,” is notoriously implacable. In the case alluded to it found expression in a claim for damages to the tune of three thousand pounds, at which formidable sum she appraised the loss she had sustained through clerical infidelity, and of which a sympathetic jury awarded her one-third. As the faithless curate's total income from all sources—paternal as well as ecclesiastical—did not exceed two hundred and thirty pounds per annum, the fact of his being cast in so heavy an amount as one thousand pounds might in itself be regarded as sufficient retribution for a jilted maiden's unquestionable wrongs. It was, indeed, agreeable to reflect that the ill-used spinster

was possessed of a comfortable little independence, and therefore stood in no actual need of pecuniary indemnification for the injuries inflicted upon her tenderest feelings. On the other hand, the pain accruing to her from having been jilted by a poor curate might have been sensibly aggravated by the consciousness that, from a worldly point of view, she was an excellent match for the inconstant one. Her annual income was larger than his by some fifty pounds a year, a consideration which, although it would seem to have had weight with him at the time he contracted his engagement, lacked force to keep him to his promise when his "fancy lightly turned to thoughts of love" with another and a younger charmer.

Judging from the wording of the defendant's last letter to the plaintiff, the fact that his affianced bride had the advantage of him in years by a decade or so, rankled in his bosom, and probably led to his abrupt rupture of contract. He was, however, unable to plead ignorance of the difference between their respective ages in extenuation of that heartless act; for when he proposed to her at Andover Station, she took the precaution, before accepting his offer, of asking him whether he knew how old she was; to which judicious question he gaily replied in the affirmative, adding, "that he knew the ages of all the young ladies in Andover." The birth register of that parish was in his keeping, and, according to his own light-hearted confession, he had studied it to some purpose. Nor can he, with any show of credibility, allege that his breach of faith towards the forsaken one was attributable to any

inherent lack of capacity on her part to awaken and maintain the fiery and absorbing passion of love; as, after they had been formally engaged for some time, he wrote to her to the effect that his soul was so entirely possessed by her dear image, that he was in constant terror lest some endearing term should escape his lips in connection with his everyday professional functions. "Fancy," he added, with hypothetical sprightliness, "old Wyatt, the vicar, saying, 'Will you visit Mrs. So-and-So ?' and my replying, 'I think not, my darling.'" A waggish vein ran through the voluminous love correspondence of this pillar of the Church, read aloud in court to the accompaniment of loud and irrepressible laughter, which at once explained his popularity with the fair sex in general, and a particular lady's poignant disappointment at being bereft of the companionship for life of so humorous and sparkling a writer. Thus, in another of his amatory epistles, couched in a more than usually merry strain, he made jesting allusion to the ruddy colour of his locks, as follows : "I believe that one of the reasons why you should have given me all your love is because I have a Rufus-like head, and desire to have a well-read wife." It was a pity that one so spontaneously mirthful should have proved so unworthy of a fond woman's devotion. The reverend humourist demonstrated only too conclusively that a curate might be a conqueror of hearts and a pleasing punster, and yet lack stability of character to stick to his word like a conscientious man.

## AËRIAL NAVIGATION.

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WITHIN the memory of that proverbial personage, the oldest inhabitant, human ingenuity has to a great extent subjugated and disciplined the mighty and mysterious forces of Nature, compelling them to further our aims and ends in a thousand different ways. They have been harnessed to our vehicles, constrained to drive our machinery, and even made to transmit our thoughts and wishes to the furthermost parts of the globe, with a swiftness far excelling that of which Puck boasted to Oberon, when he offered to "put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes." We have enlisted the "elements" into our service; earth, air, fire, and water do our bidding daily, and seldom rebel against our petty sway, content to remind us from time to time, by some tremendous display of physical power, that they are in reality our masters, though they condescend to minister to our wants and whims. Electricity and steam, hydraulic and pneumatic forces, have been trained to fetch and carry, lift and lower, at our will and pleasure; and nearly every mechanical function, the performance of which, less than a century ago, was necessarily fulfilled by manual labour, is now carried out

by them with admirable dexterity, exactitude, and cheapness. They have enabled us to solve problems without number which appeared insuperable to our ancestors. One, however, still defies all our efforts to surmount its intrinsic difficulties, and frustrates our subtlest attempts to pluck out the heart of its mystery.

This seemingly insoluble problem is aërial navigation. Some of the brightest and keenest intellects of the current century have been intently brought to bear upon it, but hitherto in vain. Countless inventions for the propulsion and guidance of air-ships through the skies have sprung from the brains of mechanical geniuses, have found concrete expression in more or less cleverly-constructed and costly models, and have been registered in the Patent Offices of every civilised country. Air-ships for many a year past have been the cherished dream of soldiers, who appreciate their destructive potentialities as engines of war ; of would-be world-trotters, deterred from visiting realms remote by the terrors of sea-sickness ; of poets, who have made them the theme of thoughts that breathe and words that burn. Long ago our gifted Laureate "saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ; Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails, Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ; Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;" and arrived at the conclusion that aërial navigation, by rendering war and international barriers impossible, would bring about in

due course of time "the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."

Alfred Tennyson's majestic prophecy has not yet been realised. Frontiers still exist; import and export duties are levied daily; Europe is a vast entrenched camp, in which five millions of trained soldiers await the signal to kill, burn, and destroy; squeamish tourists are still obliged to undergo the deathly nausea which Neptune inflicts upon his victims, or to stay at home and cull their experiences of foreign lands from books of travel. Such is the present state of affairs in a world which seems to cast some doubt on the correctness of Dr. Pangloss's famous definition; and all for lack of aërial navigation, which, whenever it shall be discovered, will certainly revolutionise human arrangements to an extent of which the present generation can form no adequate conception.

Meanwhile, contemporary inventors and experimentalisers will not let this vexed question rest, despite the lack of success which has attended the endeavours of their forerunners to answer it satisfactorily. Only a few months ago one Milosch, an aéronaut of Russian birth, made an attempt to sail the skies in the neighbourhood of Warsaw. He had constructed a large balloon, provided with an entirely novel steering apparatus of his own invention. This balloon was launched, or loosened from its fastenings to terra-firma, under his personal direction, at the hour appointed for its ascent. It rose rapidly, and quite independently of its owner's will, to a height of between nine thousand and ten thousand feet, having attained which "bad

eminence" it straightway proceeded to descend, apparently in obedience to some atmospheric caprice—for M. Milosch subsequently admitted that he had had nothing whatever to do with its downward movement, which, indeed, was so diametrically opposed to his own wishes that he had set about lightening his air-ship with all possible promptitude and despatch. After he had cast out a good deal of ballast, the balloon again rose, though by no means to its former altitude, started eastward at a good round rate of speed, and passed over a vast forest, keeping close to the tree-tops.

All this time the mortified aéronaut had not the least control over his locomotive, upon the course of which his new steering apparatus produced no more effect than a pin-prick might be expected to exercise upon the hide of a full-grown rhinoceros. The balloon carried him whither the wind listed, and exhibited the most deplorable indifference to all his strenuous efforts to make it follow the direction in which he wished it to go. Although the car in which he was desperately but fruitlessly working his apparatus was repeatedly in proximity to the uppermost branches of the pine forest, over which a lively breeze was wafting M. Milosch against his will, that much-exercised gentleman just then experienced no disposition to get out. On the contrary, he rid himself of more ballast, thus causing his balloon to make a fresh start upwards. Transported to a higher region, however, it proved just as unmanageable as before; so at last, finding his efforts to steer it utterly ineffectual, the disappointed inventor made up his mind to seek an anchorage for his

rebellious craft, and descend to the surface of the earth.

Whilst he was engaged in this quest the wind carried away his balloon over another extensive pine forest, in skimming the top of which his wicker car sustained serious damage from the trees, and he himself was so unlucky as to break one of his arms. Soon after this serious mishap befell him he reached a woodland "clearing," studded here and there with tree-stumps, against some of which the car—by this time only a few feet above the ground—was dashed with such violence that it became a total wreck. M. Milosch stuck gallantly to its remnants as long as his strength held out, being not unnaturally loth to abandon his balloon to the winds which had already used it so roughly ; but eventually the pain of his broken arm, and premonitory symptoms of faintness, induced him to throw himself from the shattered car, and he dropped, completely exhausted, but fortunately uninjured by his fall, upon the turf below, two hours having elapsed between the commencement of his aërial trip and its infelicitous close. The balloon, relieved of his weight, immediately rose to a great height, floated away into space, and was never thereafter seen or heard of.

With this abortive venture of the courageous but luckless Russian aëronaut, another fiasco was added to the long list of failures already recorded in the annals of tentative aërial navigation, and ballooning remains what it had theretofore been—an amusement for persons of exceptionally daring dispositions, a vehicle from which military men can obtain a bird's-eye view of their

enemies' forces and positions, and a means of rapid conveyance from one place to another under certain meteorological conditions. But for a successful balloon trip, the organisation of the French National Defence would probably have never been undertaken at all in the autumn of 1870—certainly not by Léon Gambetta, who was the very life and soul of that vehement reaction against the depression superinduced by a long series of crushing defeats—and peace might have been concluded between France and Germany in November instead of at the end of January, to the saving of many thousands of lives on both sides, and of at least a milliard to the exchequer of the "conquered nation."

For more than a century past ballooning adventures have been rife with hairbreadth 'scapes, although only fifteen lives have been actually lost in the course of ten thousand ascents effected by fifteen hundred aéronauts. But the risks and sufferings of these latter have frequently been very great. How many times have the occupants of balloons, blown out to sea and partially submerged, been rescued from drowning by fishermen after tasting the bitterness of death! And yet the fascinations of gliding through the air with scarcely any consciousness of motion, and of contemplating town and country, dwarfed to toy-like proportions, from a floating perch in the silent region of clear ether, have proved in the past—and will probably prove in the future—irresistibly tempting to men in whom a strong love of the romantic and picturesque is combined with iron nerves and high animal spirits. Such a one was the lamented Colonel Burnaby, whose hazardous crossing of

the British Channel in a balloon, alone and unaided, is still fresh in public memory. A Mr. Van Tassell once built "the greatest balloon in the world," and proposed to sail in it from San Francisco to the Atlantic. Perhaps he will do so some day; his enterprise, if not his balloon, is still *en l'air*. In the interests of science, too, eminent aëronauts have achieved extraordinary and perilous feats, such as that of the American Wise, who was carried a distance of one thousand one hundred and fifty miles in less than twenty hours on the wings of the wind, and of the Englishman Glaisher, who once ascended to a height of seven miles and a half for the purpose of obtaining a special meteorological observation. These and many another aëronaut of renown have performed wonderful deeds in connection with ballooning; but none of them have until now ever succeeded in steering their air-ships, the navigable capacities of which have hitherto been limited to sailing before the wind. Yet it may be that the secret of aërial navigation will be disclosed in the fulness of time—probably by persistent scientific investigation, possibly by the merest accident. Meanwhile, with trains running at the rate of a mile a minute, and steamboats that arrive at New York on the sixth day after taking their departure from Liverpool, Englishmen at least have not much to complain of in respect to their locomotive facilities.

## A MODERN ALCHEMIST.

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THERE is much square and solid truth in the proverb, "History repeats itself." Man makes history; his nature has remained unchanged throughout the ages. Therefore the records of his thoughts and deeds, no matter to what century they belong, bear a strong family resemblance to one another. That past phases of human folly should periodically recur, that they should suddenly crop up among us even in these days of widely disseminated enlightenment, cannot really surprise any one who has studied the annals of our race to any purpose. The wonder would be if they did not, for credulity and superstition are integral psychological elements of human nature, of which a Latin poet has aptly observed that "you may turn it out of doors with a pitchfork, but it will come home again without fail." It was the opinion of Mr. Wackford Squeers, of Dotheboys Hall, instructor of youth, that Nature was "a rum 'un," in which view that philosophical pedagogue was certainly justified by his personal experiences of the treatment accorded by parents to their children, and by guardians to their wards.

As far as the capacity of the human mind for indulging in irrational vagaries is concerned, we are constantly being reminded that there is nothing new under the sun. The exact research of modern science has completely exploded old-world beliefs in the possibility of discovering the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone, the transmutation of metals, and the manufacture for any practical purpose of diamonds--or, rather, the processes by which those imaginary marvels could be realised. Nevertheless, the Paris newspapers recently recorded the astonishing fact that an aged visionary, named Tiffereau, styling himself "The Alchemist of the Nineteenth Century," had delivered a lengthy discourse in public, treating of a method of manufacturing gold which he professed to have invented, and that the subject of his elaborate deliverance attracted an audience of no inconsiderable number to a hall in the Rue de Jussieu.

Making every allowance for the persistency of human folly, it is little less than amazing that, in the capital of a nation which especially prides itself upon its scientific advancement and logical temper of mind, some hundreds of grown-up persons should gather together for the express purpose of hearing an avowed alchemist dilate upon his recipe for the production of gold by alloying silver and copper and then "consolidating" them with nitric acid "infused by solar heat." Not only, however, did the assemblage in question listen patiently to M. Tiffereau's prolix exposition of his absurd theorem, but they took it all in with the keenest relish, undeterred from applauding the lecturer's fantastic reve-

lations by his mournful confession that he had spent the whole of his private fortune upon the transmutation of metals, without having derived the least pecuniary advantage from the results of arduous, incessant, and life-long labour. One would think that this infelicitous admission would have sufficed to inspire the alchemist's hearers with deep distrust of his method. The prospect, however, of being able some day to purchase gold at the rate of six pounds sterling per kilogramme, or one twenty-fifth of the precious metal's present market value, seems to have proved irresistibly fascinating ; for M. Tiffereau's audience, at the close of his lecture, went its way "sweetly dreaming of the omnipotence of pelf," and mentally contemplating the possibility of developing into so many Monte-Christos, under the magic spell of the "Alchemist of the Nineteenth Century."

From time immemorial the transmutation of metals has been carried on with varied success by ingenious individuals, in whose hands it has for the most part taken the form of conveying coin out of other people's pockets into their own. Not that the practice of alchemy —a term derived from an Arabic word signifying "the occult science"—was ever confined to industrials of this class. From time to time great chemists, such as Lavoisier, Spallanzani, and Leuwenhock, have dabbled in it, and burnt their fingers. Agrippa and Paracelsus were both tempted to address themselves seriously to the discovery of the philosopher's stone, as well as to the study of natural magic, and yielded to the temptation. That puissant General and astute statesman,

Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland, wasted vast sums of money in the vain pursuit of this chimæra, and his costly collection of crucibles, alembics, retorts, furnaces, and other apparatus for the fusing of all manner of expensive materials into an amalgam, from which he proposed to "precipitate" pure gold by a process nearly akin to that of M. Tiffereau, have been carefully preserved at Eger, in Bohemia, where they are permanently "on view" in the palace formerly tenanted by the mighty warrior-alchemist.

As late as the Elizabethan period of our own history, the pseudo-science was more or less lucratively "exploited" in this country, at the cost of the credulous, by plausible empirics and magniloquent impostors, who were at least skilled in the art of mystifying their clients by the glib use of a formidable technological vocabulary. In his comedy, "The Alchemist," a scathing satire upon the transmutating charlatans of that day and their silly dupes, rare Ben Jonson makes one of his characters, a sceptical gamester, describe alchemy as "a pretty kind of game, Somewhat like tricks o' the cards, to cheat a man With charming," and catalogues a few of its "worlds of strange ingredients, Would burst a man to name," as follows: "Your elixir, your lac virginis, Your stone, your med'cine, and your chrysosperme, Your sal, your sulphur, and your mercury, Your oil of height, your tree of life, your blood, Your marche-site, your tutie, your magnesia, Your toad, your crow, your dragon, and your panther, Your sun, your moon, your firmament, your adrop, Your Lato, Azoch, Zernich, Chibrit, Heautarit, And then your red man and

your white woman, With all your broths, your menstrues and materials." The play was written at a time when a bitter controversy was raging among the members of the "faculty," with respect to Dr. Anthony's famous "Aurum Potabile," to which Jonson scornfully alluded in more than one passage of his vigorous comedy. Even within the last hundred years a lingering belief in magical spells, potent for the discovery of gold, has been delightfully ridiculed by the most popular of British authors, Walter Scott. Who has not revelled in the grandiloquent gibberish of Hermann Dousterswivel, and the self-sufficient gullibility of Sir Arthur Wardour? One of De Balzac's most powerful fictions, too, "La Recherche de l'Absolu," sets forth the gradual moral deterioration and ultimate ruin of a wealthy Dutch gentleman, afflicted by the deadly gold-manufacturing mania, which irresistibly impels him to squander three colossal fortunes, break his loving wife's heart, and impoverish his dutiful and high-minded children.

The sudden appearance in the year of Grace, 1889, of an "Alchemist of the Nineteenth Century" on the platform of a lecture-room in the gay city which claims to be the *chef-lieu* of human civilisation, and the still quainter circumstance that his delusions obtained an attentive hearing from a large number of Parisians, are somewhat startling proofs that popular faith in the transmutation of metals—that "eternal dream, At which calm Nature smiles"—has by no means died out, at least in France. For all the average Englishman knows to the contrary, there may still be "searchers for the absolute" in this country, believed in and venerated

by groups of disciples, who follow their investigations with absorbing interest, and cherish the conviction that, in the fulness of time, they will succeed in transforming some cheap and plentiful materials into good red gold, or haply in converting "black diamonds" into brilliants of the first water.

Self-deception of this kind, deplorable and contemptible as it unquestionably is from the scientific point of view, rarely injures any one save the weak-minded persons who submit themselves to its baneful sway. In the majority of aggravated cases it lands these unfortunates in the tranquil retreat afforded by some respectable lunatic asylum, or compels their relatives to place them under private restraint and administer, on behalf of their legal heirs, the fortunes which, were they left to their own insensate devices, they would speedily dissipate in fruitless attempts to achieve the impossible.

It is difficult to conceive a more inept and futile pursuit, than that having for its object the cheap fabrication of gold. Supposing it crowned with perfect success, its result could only benefit a single individual, and him no longer than he could keep the secret of his process inviolate. As soon as some rival experimentalist should "pluck out the heart of his mystery," gold would inevitably lose its value and become a drug in the money market. The world's business would be seriously impeded until metallurgists and political economists should have come to a definitive agreement, requiring the joint sanction of all nations, respecting the financial and commercial medium to be universally

adopted in the stead of poor gold, fallen from its high estate into copper obscurity or leaden degradation. Taking one consideration with another, it is a good thing for mankind at large that the transmutation of metals is a delusion and a snare, and likely to remain so, in the words of the old Christmas carol, "to all eternitee."

## A FREAK OF FASHION.

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ONE of those mysterious fiats has gone forth which are pronounced by no one in particular, but are suddenly accepted by "society" in general as final and conclusive. Life is so complex nowadays, and the mechanism guiding its conventional arrangements is moved by such a bewildering number of "wheels within wheels," that even modistes and man-milliners of the very first flight would be at fault for a reply were they asked who it is that frames and promulgates the decrees of fashion. In former ages, when the fashionable world was a sort of pocket-borough always at the disposal of Royalty—when the persons belonging to it were few in number and fenced round with privileges—when every social class wore clothes of a cut and colour distinctively prescribed to it by stern habilimentary laws—it was for the most part easy enough to trace a change of fashion back to its original source, either on the Throne itself or in the immediate *entourage* of that venerated centre.

A King was sorely exercised by a swelling on the back of his neck, which he made a point of concealing beneath a high starched frill; straightway all his courtiers surrounded their throats with stiff ruffs, and

unmurmuringly suffered the torments of the pillory. Or a pious Queen made a solemn vow not to change her body-linen for a year and a day; with one accord, a few weeks later, matrons and maids of high degree had their underclothing boiled in some light tawny solution, in order to impart to it artificially the "couleur Isabelle" which, by that time, their Sovereign's superfine lawn had acquired by a gradual and too natural process. Sometimes it was a Monarch of the male sex who, being endowed with exceptionally shapely legs, brought skin-tight hose or baggy knee-breeches into fashion; or an Heir Apparent afflicted with abnormally lengthy feet, who judiciously prolonged the points of his shoes, turning them up until they all but reached his waist, and thus effectually masked his pedal redundancy. To make the best, as they deemed, of inborn peculiarities of figure, Royal dames localised their waists an inch or two under their arms, or squeezed them down to a fine point between their hips. They uncovered their shoulders and necks until the body of a "full-dress" frock was reduced to little more than a broad belt and a couple of narrow straps, or they wore their gowns "up to the throat" and with long sleeves reaching down to their very wrists. Instances of the transformations wrought in fashions by feminine caprice or obedience to the dictates of personal vanity might be multiplied almost indefinitely; but, until a comparatively recent date, the majority of these changes could be readily identified with their originators, as a rule ladies of exalted rank, paramount social influence, and great personal attractions.

Nowadays the votaries of fashion are so much more numerous than they were of yore, and the initiative of change is left to so far greater an extent in the hands of notorious “marchandes des modes” and “consultative artists” of the male sex—veritable autocrats, whose decisions as to colour and “cut,” design and decoration, are accepted by their fair clients with grateful humility—that a wholesome reform or a startling innovation can rarely be ascribed with truth, as formerly, to an Empress, a Queen, or even a Royal favourite of the Montespan or Pompadour class. “Society” wakes up one morning with its customary *insouciance*, and finds to its surprise that what was “the correct thing” yesterday is very much otherwise to-day. It does not trouble itself to inquire how or by whom the revolution has been effected that overthrew the old cult and established the new one, but turns its attention at once to certain persons of recognised authority in questions of habilimental taste. If they have adopted the novelty, whatever it may be, society promptly follows suit throughout its countless upper and middle strata, and a fresh fashion is set, none being so poor as to do its predecessor further reverence.

The latest transformation of this sort, sensible people rejoiced to observe, resulted in the elimination of the “dress-improver” by an unwritten decree, which relieved modern female dress of its most monstrous and graceless absurdity. At the great social gatherings which signalled his Persian Majesty’s brief sojourn in London, the total abandonment of this grotesque appendage by its previous wearers was agreeably noticeable. With

but few exceptions, the ladies of light and leading assembled to honour the Shah and gratify their own natural curiosity at Marlborough House, Hatfield, Waddesdon Manor, Halton, in the Albert Hall and the Empire Theatre, and in the salons of many a noble mansion beside, wore absolutely plain skirts with little or no trimming, and were undisfigured by the absurd convexity that "sisters, cousins, and aunts," for the previous two or three years, had perversely insisted on dragging about behind them whenever they took their walks abroad.

The "dress-improver," now gathered to its defunct predecessors of the same kind, was a most ungraceful object, unbecoming to woman and oppressive to man, for it took up too much room at theatres, concerts, and dinner-parties—to say nothing of its aggressiveness in every variety of private and public vehicle—and moreover increased the cost of those elaborate "costumes" which fathers and husbands are privileged to pay for and grumble at. It had not even the merit of being a novelty, but was only a mere aggravated revival of an obsolete folly. More than a century ago, in the period of powder and patches, ladies added to their figure by inserting woollen or feather pads under the "gatherings" of their gowns. Later on—within the memory, indeed, of middle-aged persons—there came in a creation in the shape of a miniature pillow or bolster, stuffed with some soft material; then of a gutta-percha bag inflated with air; then of a stiff horsehair contrivance in two storeys, so to speak; and, lastly, of a steel or whalebone framework, something like a badly-made birdcage in

a state of partial collapse. In its every guise the thing was an ugly and ridiculous incongruity, and the fair sex may be cordially congratulated upon having cast it from them, presumably for ever.

Nor is it only with relation to the “dress-improver” and its summary abolition that the latest caprices of fashion are sincerely welcome to all sensible folk of both sexes, as indicating a tendency towards rational reform in those who inspire and regulate the vagaries of female attire. The comfortable assurance has gone forth that a distinct abatement in the exorbitant height of ladies’ hats and bonnets has already made itself manifest in those public places where “lionnes” most do congregate, and that a further reduction of dimensions, as far as these formidable headdresses are concerned, may be confidently looked for at no distant date. This announcement cannot fail to be greeted with jubilation, as good tidings of great joy, by the habitual pittite and the confirmed frequenter of morning performances, theatrical and musical, for whom the gigantic structures superimposed upon the heads of ladies sitting in front of them have for many a past month been a weariness of the flesh and a mortification of the spirit. What could be more unpleasant to a lover of the drama or a votary of the divine art than to have a tall fabric of straw and velvet, feathers and flowers, interposed between his line of vision and some favourite actress or songstress, the play of whose features he is intent upon watching with strenuous attention ?

That ladies should keep their headgear on at places of popular entertainment in which men are required to

doff their hats—frequently to the serious prejudice of those glossy and highly sensitive articles—is in itself a custom that would assuredly be more honoured in the breach than the observance. In this respect these fair tyrants somewhat abuse the privilege of their puissant sex, and the powers that submissive man sometimes imprudently confides to their assumed discretion and good taste. It would be a graceful act on their part if, when visiting any part of a theatre or concert-room, the seats of which are arranged on a dead level or a very slight incline upwards from the stage or platform, they would voluntarily consent to remove their hats or bonnets during the performance, and thereby give the spectators in their immediate rear a fair chance of seeing, as well as hearing, whatever may be going on behind the foot-lights. It were, perhaps, Utopian to hope for any such paramount condescension or deference to general convenience on the part of those who “double our joys and halve our sorrows,” although the enthusiastic gratitude of man would assuredly reward so magnanimous a display of feminine self-sacrifice. The next best thing, however, to the total disappearance of the monumental hat is the curtailment of its inordinate proportions; and there is good reason to believe that that mitigated blessing will ere long be generally accorded.

## THE LONDON SUNDAY, AND OTHER METROPOLITAN DISABILITIES.

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AT a time when foreign Protectionist tariffs, practically excluding many a product of British industry from Continental markets, stimulate the advocates of Reciprocity to dilate upon the beauties of that principle, as applied to commercial transactions, one may perhaps venture to point out how entirely it is ignored by Englishmen—particularly by Londoners—with respect to the entertainment of every class and description of alien visiting these shores. At the holiday season of the year, many thousands of intelligent, well-to-do, and pleasure-loving foreigners are attracted to the United Kingdom by a natural desire to become personally acquainted with one of the most picturesque and historically interesting countries in Europe. It may safely be asserted that they all come to London. Many of them, doubtless, make excursions to Scotland, Wales, the lake districts, and the fashionable seaside settlements; but the metropolis is their headquarters—their basis of operations—the Alpha and Omega of their English tour. In vain, bearing in mind the recreative resources of their own respective capitals, do they seek

within the precincts of this huge city for any practical recognition, by public or private enterprise, of the principle of Reciprocity, expressed in the provision of amusement for the strangers within our gates.

The shortcoming in question is apparent enough, to their extreme perplexity and discomfiture, during the six working days of the week ; but it is on the seventh that it utterly dumbfounders and appals them. The dulness of the British Sunday, simply tiresome to the native-born Londoner, exercises an absolutely crushing effect upon the spirits of the French or German tourist whom an adverse destiny has doomed to spend the Sabbath within hearing of Bow Bells. He finds himself sternly prohibited by the "custom of the country" from all manner of indoor sight-seeing, no matter how innocent or instructive. He may not even eat and drink at his own good will and pleasure, but only within certain time-limits prescribed by ultra-Puritanical statutes. Every pleasure-resort is closed to him, alike by day and by night. He may not feast his eyes upon a mimic megalosaurus at South Kensington, or upon a genuine mummy in Great Russell Street. He is given to understand that, from an English point of view, it is a mortal sin to look upon pictures or statues between Saturday and Monday, and that he ought to be grateful to a moral legislature for preventing him from risking his soul's welfare by indulgence in such depraved pastimes. There is not, within the whole length and breadth of a capital inhabited by more than four millions of human beings, a single theatre, concert-room, music-hall, or dancing establishment to which he can obtain access, for

love or money, on the day of all others which, in his own country, he is accustomed to devote to recreation. Nay more, there is not one open place in London where he can take his seat within hail of refreshment and listen to the strains of an orchestra or military band, smoking his cigar or cigarette the while. As regards the mere solace of sitting down, not hitherto denounced as criminal or even irreverent by our most uncompromising Sabbatarians, the parks offer him but scanty accommodation in the way of gratuitous benches—the public streets and squares, with one exception, none whatever. Trafalgar Square itself, the largest, finest, and most central of our metropolitan piazze, can only boast of a few plain benches, seated upon which the foreign tourist may at his leisure gloat upon the imposing spectacle afforded to him by statuary inimitable in its way, and fountains of which it may with truth be said that “none but themselves can be their parallel.”

This disability to take any open-air rest in a sedentary attitude must surely impress our visitor from abroad as one of the most inexplicable of our many and amazing metropolitan peculiarities. “Why,” he can hardly fail to ask himself, “must I always walk or stand during that portion of my holiday sojourn in London which is passed in endeavouring to see the sights of this great city? Where are the chairs and little round tables, set out in front of *cafés* and beer-halls, which I am accustomed to find on every boulevard—almost at every street corner—of Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Brussels, nay, of every tenth-rate Continental town? If, weary of wandering up and down the endless

London thoroughfares, I sink exhausted upon a door-step, mocking crowds will gather round me, and soon a policeman will severely invite me to 'Move on!' In order to sit down when I am tired and footsore, I must hire a cab or enter a shop, where, upon the condition of purchasing something I do not want, I may be allowed to occupy a chair for a few minutes." This last expedient, of course, is only available to him on a week-day, as all the shops containing sitting accommodation are closed upon the Sabbath. The fact in itself is a serious aggravation of his manifold Sunday grievances, for it debars him from the mild and harmless diversion of staring for hours at a stretch into the shop windows.

What, indeed, is he to look at, with any pleasure or profit to himself, during his painful peregrinations through London streets upon the Day of Rest? Our domestic architecture, except in some of the more fashionable and artistic semi-suburban districts, is not generally characterised by any striking beauty of form or colour. But slender store of joy is to be derived from gazing at one long row after another of dingy brick house-fronts, pierced at depressingly regular intervals by flat, oblong-square windows, and fenced in from the pavement by railings of the ugliest pattern ever devised by distorted human ingenuity. Of our public monuments and plastic memorials the less said the better. We are not particularly proud of them; and there lives not the Londoner so extravagantly sanguine as to believe that objects which cause him to shudder every time he casts a casual glance at them, will prove a source of rapturous delight to the foreigner.

condemned by utter lack of other attractions to bestow his undivided attention upon them, haply throughout a long summer Sunday afternoon. Yet, what else can we, in the present state of our laws, offer to this unfortunate fellow-creature in the way of street sights? Not, surely, the sooty nondescripts, supposed to be counterfeit presentments of British statesmen and patricians, that scowl misanthropically from within the prohibited precincts of our West End squares? That way madness, of the melancholy sort, lies. We are by no means reciprocal to our foreign friends in the matter of amusements, but we had rather confess ourselves utterly incapable of giving them pleasure, than attempt for a moment to rank these hideous monstrosities among the Sunday attractions of our dismal metropolis.

Let any unprejudiced Englishman who has travelled abroad conjure up to his mind's eye the picture of a Continental Sunday as he has passed it over and over again in any large town of any European State, Catholic or Protestant, and contrast it with the aspect presented by London to the foreigner sojourning here on the Sabbath Day; and let him then fairly and honestly compare the circumstances in their detail as well as their ensemble thus brought back to his recollection with the actualities of a London Sunday as they cannot but present themselves to the apprehension of the French or German tourist. On the one hand memory will remind him of pleasant scenes in which he himself has figured without smart of conscience or fear of reproach—of public gardens provided with every imaginable resource in the way of refreshment, thronged by

gaily-dressed people of all ranks and conditions, taking their recreation without the least breach of decorum or offence to one another ; of excellent music, admirably performed, and costing its audience not a penny ; of first-class theatrical performances, concerts, classical and popular, *cafés chantants*, and well-regulated ball-rooms ; of, in a word, innumerable gratuitous or cheap amusements provided for all classes of the community, from the poorest to the richest, and by them enjoyed with almost unexceptional observance of order, decency, and the unwritten laws of politeness.

On the other hand, if he only takes a stroll through London, opening his eyes to features of its Sabbath aspect which, did he not compel himself to bestow special attention upon them, would probably escape his notice —so hopelessly accustomed are resident Londoners to the uniform dulness and gloom of their dwelling-place on the weekly holiday—he must be convinced that the tiniest, most unpretentious, and unsophisticated Continental capital can outbid this gigantic metropolis, for all its boastful claims to political and social liberty, in every resource connected with one of the chief essentials to a people's happiness and contentment —namely, recreation. Such is the power of Pharisaism and mock-morality on this side of the British Channel that London, the capital of what once was “Merrie England,” has wrought herself to the conviction not only that it is requisite and necessary for nineteen-twentieths of her permanent inhabitants to bore themselves nigh unto death on Sunday, but that it is her duty to inflict insufferable *ennui* upon her foreign visitors to boot.

Of reciprocity with the Continent, as far as amusements are concerned, she simply has not the slightest notion.

The working men's petition in favour of opening the British Museum, the South Kensington and Bethnal Green Museums, and the National Gallery to the people on Sundays found an able advocate in the House of Peers, when Lord Thurlow moved that its prayer be granted. That his motion was defeated by the narrow vote of sixty-seven to fifty-nine—that is to say, by a majority of eight—showed that public opinion upon this question is being “educated” in a liberal sense of the term. The real question, as Lord Derby pointed out, is this, “Are certain collections formed by the State and paid for by the State out of taxation levied from all classes of the community to be thrown open for the benefit of the great mass of the community at the only time when it is practicable for those persons to visit them?” Lord Beaconsfield seemed to base his objection to the motion mainly on two grounds. Since the question was first introduced, the peculiar holiday-time of the working class had been vastly augmented, so that they had, if they cared, plenty of opportunity for visiting picture-galleries and museums without trenching on the sanctity of the Sabbath. Then any change in the national habit of Sabbath observance must influence national opinion on the question generally, and perhaps weaken the wholesome prejudice against tampering with the one day of rest out of the week which tradition and religious feeling alike secure to the toiling masses. The Premier, however, himself answered his first argument when he

admitted that, in spite of existing facilities, it was still desirable to bring "the civilising influences of Art and Science into nearer relation with the general life" of the people. As for his second argument, the existing practice overthrows it, for that practice is not even logical in its puritanical oppressiveness.

As the law now stands vast numbers of clerks, shopmen, and artisans are virtually debarred from visiting the museums and the National Gallery, although, in common with the rest of Her Majesty's subjects, they are required to contribute to the support of those institutions. For it appears to be deemed incompatible with the observance of the Sabbath, as practised by the Anglo-Saxon race during the present century, that the people should have access to its collections of antiquities, pictures, and statues upon its only leisure day. As far as pictures are concerned, the ordinances that exclude the public on Sunday from the dingy edifice which occupies "the finest site in Europe" are utterly inconsistent. If the contemplation of paintings upon the Sabbath be a sinful pastime, its prohibition by the authorities is justifiable on grounds of public morality; but by what process of reasoning can this particular form of recreation be made to derive its turpitude from one locality more than another? Admitting that it is wrong to look at pictures in Trafalgar Square, it must be at least equally wrong to look at pictures in Hampton Court; perhaps a shade more so in the case of the genuine Londoner, who is bound to aggravate the original offence assumed to lie in the visiting of a picture-gallery upon the Sabbath.

by the further guilt of Sunday travelling, if he desire to spend his weekly holiday within the precincts of Wolsey's famous Palace. It would seem, however, that this parity in the degree of wrong-doing—if wrong-doing there be in regaling the eye with masterpieces of art—is not apparent to the authorities having control over our national collections of pictures ; for, while the galleries at Trafalgar Square, South Kensington, and Bethnal Green, are rigorously closed to the public on the day of rest, the gallery at Hampton Court is accessible to all those who can afford to incur the expense of a railway return-ticket or a double omnibus-fare.

That “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,” is an axiom which comes to us from high authority, and is recognised as indisputable by the very persons who display the greatest eagerness to stultify it in practice. Yet it has for a great number of years past been to a certain extent ignored by the Legislature of this country, while generally—indeed, unanimously—acknowledged by the Governments of Continental nations. Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Italians, Germans, Scandinavians, and Slavs, alike regard the Sabbath as a holiday set apart for recreation ; but Englishmen persist in treating it as a day to be spent partly in devotional exercises, and partly in what is somewhat vaguely defined as “taking rest.” Differences between the religious creeds prevalent in the respective countries which hold the recreative view of Sunday, obviously exercise no influence upon their legislation in this regard ; for Calvinistic Prussia and Presbyterian Holland are as tolerant of popular amusements on that

day as Catholic Spain or Orthodox Russia. We alone among Christian nations assume that prayer and rest are the exclusive objects for which the Sabbath was instituted by Divine wisdom, and consider it our duty to enforce the achievement of those objects, as far as it may be humanly possible to do so, by the agency of repressive and prohibitive laws.

No Act of Parliament can compel men to pray ; but the law can, and does, constrain men to "take rest," whether they like it or not. The statute interpretation of "taking rest" would appear to be "doing nothing," which is a somewhat arbitrary rendering. To many men change of occupation is rest—the only rest they wish or care for—while others find repose from their daily bread-earning occupations in amusements of a more or less frivolous and superficial character. Were governments and parliaments, or even the peoples who elect them, strictly logical in their actions, Englishmen, who are so proud of contrasting their inborn freedom with the restrictions endured by foreigners, would insist upon their right to take rest and recreation every man after the manner most agreeable to him, always provided that such indulgence did not lead to the violation of any commonly recognised canon of morality, or to the prejudice of important class interests. It is perfectly in keeping with the principles upon which despotic rule is based that a "paternal" government should decree how and when the majority of its subjects should or should not amuse themselves ; but such ordinances are scarcely compatible with the blessings of liberty which are supposed to make a self-governed people happy, and to

justify them in asserting their innate superiority over those who tamely submit to be ruled by irresponsible *régimes*. Oddly enough, it is the despotic governments, as a rule, that are pre-eminently tolerant of their subjects' recreations, to which they contribute with infinite intelligence and generosity. Not only do they throw open the doors of their museums and picture-galleries on Sundays and saints' days to all classes of people, without stint or restriction, but they provide excellent musical entertainments for them, free of cost, and stimulate their taste for the drama by subventioning theatres so liberally that managers are enabled to furnish the poorer classes with amusement of an æsthetic and intellectual character at almost nominal prices. The people, in fact, well-nigh everywhere in Europe except on our side of the "silver streak," is benevolently encouraged, by those set over it in authority, to dance, sing, and be merry "within the limits of becoming mirth;" in a word, to amuse itself to the top of its bent upon every fit and proper occasion. Consequently, the Continental Sunday is utilised by Protestant, Catholic, and Greek Orthodox alike, not only in mere passive relaxation from labour, but in hearty enjoyment of amusements that are frequently gratuitous, always cheap, and for the most part harmless.

I do not presume to infer that holiday institutions, conceived and established upon so broad a basis of religious toleration as those obtaining in France, Germany, Austria, and other great Continental realms, would be found suitable to this country. "The English," said worthy Froissart, with keen insight into one of our

national characteristics, "amuse themselves very sadly;" and they have not changed their natures in any essential respect since the "good old times" so graphically described by that excellent chronicler of manners and customs. It is more than probable that the opening of theatres, concert-rooms, and dancing saloons on Sunday evenings would deeply pain and shock the vast majority of Englishmen, and that any attempt to legalise dramatic performances on the Sabbath would be as strenuously condemned by the working classes as by their social superiors. As a nation we may be said to have adopted the "Day of Rest" view of Sunday, partly because we work at high pressure and instinctively feel the urgent necessity for absolute repose at regular intervals, partly because we incline to a more literal interpretation and reverent observance of Scriptural texts than obtain in other Christian countries. It may be doubted, too, whether the Englishman loves pleasure for mere pleasure's sake, or bestows so large a share of his thought and energy upon obtaining it as does the Frenchman, the German, or the Italian. But I contend that no legitimate susceptibilities can be wounded, no class interests prejudicially affected, no section of the community wronged or reasonably offended by the opening to the London public of our splendid National Collections of Art, Science, and History, whereby the working classes of this metropolis may be provided with an alternative to the public-house on the many inclement Sunday afternoons when places of out-of-door recreation are of no avail for purposes of health and relaxation. Wherever opportunities have been afforded to those

whose lives are passed all the rest of the week in unremitting toil to visit museums and picture-galleries upon their day of respite from labour, it has been found that they have behaved themselves in a decorous and creditable manner, and that the results of admitting them to participation in these necessarily tranquil and contemplative recreations have been highly beneficial to their habits and manners. The experiment has been tried elsewhere, and has proved successful. There can be no valid reason why it should not be repeated in the most civilised city of the world.

In adding to the scanty open-air sitting accommodation of the metropolis by causing a number of benches to be set up within the precincts of Trafalgar Square, Lord Brabazon not only conferred a real and lasting benefit upon the inhabitants of London, but set a praiseworthy example of timely and judicious generosity to his wealthy and public-spirited fellow-citizens. Although this mighty city is more than equal in size and number of population to the three largest Continental capitals—Paris, Berlin, and Vienna—it has hitherto remained all but utterly devoid of conveniences of the above class, regarded by the denizens of tenth-rate foreign cities as indispensable to the satisfaction of their common every-day requirements, and profusely supplied to them by State or municipal authorities. There is scarcely a provincial town throughout Central and Western Europe which is not more liberally provided with free seats whereupon the weary pedestrian may take his rest gratuitously and to his heart's content, than is the enormous congeries of bricks and mortar

which may, in more than one respect and without overweening presumption, lay claim to the title of the World's Capital. Why this should be so I confess myself at a loss to explain; but such is the undeniable fact, which is all the more remarkable because Londoners, as a rule, are greatly addicted to walking exercise, and because the distances with which they are accustomed to deal on foot, in the course of their daily avocations, are far more considerable than those traversed by the residents in any foreign capital. Lounging is by no means a London characteristic. The equivalent of the French *flâneur*, or German *Missiggänger*, is rarer than a black swan in ninety-nine metropolitan streets out of a hundred. Whether bent upon business or pleasure, the Londoner proper is wont to perform his perambulations at a smart pace, with a certain air of being in a hurry that is imparted to him by the condition of high pressure in which he lives, often himself unconscious of its effect upon his outward bearing and demeanour. His very gait is a practical illustration of the essentially English adage, "Time is money;" and his obvious eagerness to arrive at his destination is, generally speaking, significant of his deeply-rooted conviction that minutes constitute a capital upon which he has no right to draw over-lavishly by undue lingerings on his way. As a matter of fact, he covers more ground and at a greater average rate of speed between sunrise and sunset than the Parisian, the Berliner, or the Viennese, and therefore should, from a logical point of view, be more abundantly provided than they with facilities for brief and opportune *al-fresco*

repose. Unfortunately, however, it is not the English habit to give logical principles development in the shape of convenience or accommodation to the public at large; and so the metropolitan pedestrian, be he never so weary or footsore, is fain to take a chair indoors for lack of the simplest stone slab or most unassuming wooden plank whereupon, were it at his disposal on the sidewalk of a broad thoroughfare or against the spiked railings of a quiet square, he might from time to time snatch a few moments of salutary and much-needed rest.

Whatever the source whence Lord Brabazon may have derived the suggestion upon which he so generously acted, it is greatly to his credit that, of his own free will and at his own expense, he should have done for London what municipalities, Ministries of Public Works, and parochial boards do, as a matter of course, for Continental cities, great and small. Our national pride may be wounded by the fact that we alone, among civilised nations, are compelled to acknowledge our dependence upon private enterprise and generosity for such additions to our common comfort and convenience as those with which Leicester and Trafalgar Squares have been endowed; but Londoners are none the less grateful to Mr. Albert Grant and Lord Brabazon for their thoughtful and kindly liberality, because the inhabitants of this metropolis have been taught by long and discouraging experience to look in vain to "constituted authorities" for that consideration of small but pressing public needs to which peoples more paternally governed than themselves are so agreeably accustomed. It is not through any settled

indisposition to spend money that our corporations and boards lay themselves open to reproach, but through a seeming inability to distinguish between the useless and the useful in the objects upon which they lavish the ample resources at their disposal. London, for instance, could have cheerfully foregone the gruesome Jabberwock that sprawls above the site of old Temple Bar ; and the amount of hard cash squandered upon that ridiculous monster would have sufficed to provide the City's daily influx of business pilgrims with hundreds of inexpensive resting-places. However, as the proverb says, "what can't be cured must be endured," and we must perforce make the best of "those ills we have" in the way of civic adornment, in the hope that the powers that be, animated by Lord Brabazon's example, will some day turn their attention from what they conceive to be ornamental to matters more immediately concerning public comfort and convenience.

In one respect, at least, no Continental capital offers such facilities to the establishment of free seats for the accommodation of pedestrians as London. This enormous city with its ever-growing suburbs is possessed of countless breathing-places, more or less verdant and spacious, affording ample room for the setting up of stone or iron benches without causing any obstruction to wheeled traffic or inconvenience to foot-passengers. We may not possess as many "places" as French, German, or Italian towns, even of minor importance, can boast of ; but the name of our squares is legion, and, broadly speaking, they may one and all be confidently

pronounced apt, with slight modifications of their present exclusive arrangements, for the introduction of free seats within their precincts. London has not, as yet, taken kindly to the boulevard class of thoroughfare, so magnificently represented—leaving Paris out of the question—in the German capital by the Linden Avenue, and in Vienna by the stately Ring Strasse. Our leading commercial and fashionable streets, with few exceptions, are perhaps hardly wide enough, considering the enormous demands made upon them by vehicles and pedestrians alike, to admit of being cumbered on any portion of their surface with fixtures of an impedimentary character. There is, it may be, sufficient room on the *trottoirs* of such spacious roadways as Pall Mall, Regent and St. James's Streets, the Bayswater Road, and a few of the broader arterial thoroughfares connecting the suburbs with the heart of London, for benches firmly planted on the kerbstone at reasonably wide intervals ; but, as a rule, our busiest and most frequented streets are unfitted, by reason of their narrowness, for any innovation that would lessen their capacities for accommodating general traffic. Our squares and parks, however, are not affected by any such disabilities ; and much still remains to be done in order to render them really serviceable, as well as recreative, to the metropolitan public. In so capricious a climate as ours, for instance, the only conspicuous tendency of which exhibits itself in the direction of frequent and profuse rain, why should not our more popular open-air resorts be provided with a few cheap but ornamental refuges against the constantly recurrent deluges discharged

upon us from heaven's canopy—our chronic shower-bath? The wooden shelters that stand upon some of our cab-ranks are rife with wholesome suggestion of possible protection, in exposed and isolated spots, from the inclemencies of London weather.

Again, what a delight it would be to uncounted Englishmen could they see their vast metropolis endowed with the comfort and adornment of freely-flowing water in its open places to a far greater extent than that seemingly aspired to by persons who regard the liquid in question exclusively from a utilitarian point of view. Too much can hardly be done to provide gratuitous assuagement of the people's thirst in a city which, considering its size and the number of its inhabitants, is of all European capitals the most forlorn of elementary accommodation in the way of open-air rest and refreshment. With her many pretensions, well-founded and otherwise, to pose before the world as an epitome of modern civilisation, London is worse off for drinking fountains and free seats than many a Continental town of one-twentieth her dimensions. Wealthy and enlightened as she is, she should be able to boast, without fear of contradiction, that neither man nor beast within her spacious precincts need undergo five minutes' inconvenience for lack of a draught of pure cold water. Copious and costless ministration to the thirst of London's poorer classes is the more urgently requisite during the summer season, because the art of combining coolness and cheapness with harmlessness in manufactured drinks is still unknown—or at least unpractised—in the British capital.

There is scarcely a London parish—certainly not a postal district—in which the parched working man may not prosecute, through miles of arid streets and squares, a vain search for any sort of inexpensive liquor that cheers but not inebriates. At well-nigh every corner he will endure the mute mockery of hermetic hydrants and padlocked pumps. If he be absolutely penniless, there will be nothing for him but to "suffer and be strong" while getting over the mile or two of distance that separates him from the nearest drinking fountain. But let us suppose him possessed of the Queen's effigy in bronze, a unique exemplar, and willing to part with his pecuniary all in exchange for a cool, refreshing drink. What can he get in that line for a penny? The half-pint of public-house porter or fourpenny ale is seldom cold, and often so salt as to aggravate thirst instead of allaying it. No surcease of drouth is to be derived from the tepid explosives of the wandering gingerbeer cart. The penny ice undeniably conveys a blended sense of coolness and moisture to tongue and palate, but as a thirst assuager it is a dire delusion and a saline snare. Iced Lager or Tivoli is a beverage quite beyond the workman's means. Indeed, one must be tolerably well off to indulge, save on highdays and holidays, in liquid refreshment costing from three to five pence a glass. In London, broadly speaking, the man with a penny cannot quench his thirst pleasurable, or even satisfactorily. Were he a Parisian or a Viennese, a Roman or a Florentine, he could drink his fill for nothing at public fountains without number, and the equivalent of his penny would purchase a soothing pint of natural

lemonade, comfortably cooled and delicately fragrant. Being a Londoner, however, he must endure the thirst-torment until such time as a drinking fountain twelve streets off, or the still more remote domestic tap, can afford his sufferings alleviation, with the solitary alternative of investing his whole available capital in a liquid disappointment.

Without doubt it is high time that the inhabitants of London should be supplied with drinking water, gratis and *al fresco*, upon a scale of unexampled liberality and amplitude. Their ædiles, on either side the boundary line that would have been marked so much more usefully as well as ornamentally by a fountain than by a Monster, would do well to lend serious attention to this pressing public want. But were they to meet, ever so generously, the popular demand for "potations pottle deep" to which the best of Good Templars could not take exception, we should still feel inclined, with respect to the exhibition of water in our streets and public places, to take example from Oliver Twist, and "ask for more."

Let something in the fountain line be done to gratify the Londoner's eye, as well as to slake his throat. Water, artistically dealt with and disposed, is the brightest and most joyous of urban adornments. In that capacity it is unknown to this metropolis; for the paltry squirts in Trafalgar Square are in no regard ornamental, although nothing were easier than, by due adjustment of a few simple and well-known contrivances, to convert their feeble, commonplace jets into picturesque arrangements of prismatic feathers, translucent water-

gloves and fans, and glistening threads of liquid crystal. Thus might the paragons of inefficiency that now dis honour "the finest site in Europe" be transformed into things of beauty that are joys for ever, were it the business of any official personage vested with power and authority to beautify our huge capital.

As matters, however, stand with London and her Boards—metropolitan, municipal, and parochial—the twin Trafalgar tricklers may prolong their sloppy career for many a year to come, ignoble caricatures of such stately "water plays" as, but for an incomprehensible indifference to the fitness of things on the part of a foregone generation, should long since have furnished our noblest piazza with decorations worthy of its intrinsic grandeur. Paltry and contemptible as are these abortive fountains, they are well-nigh all that London streets possess of their kind. Save where Nelson contemptuously turns his pigtail to a brace of national failures, one can scarce call to mind a spot within the four-mile radius to which water has been adapted for ornamental purposes. Yet water, all things considered, is tolerably cheap in London, and, but for a certain Parliamentary gingerliness in dealing with vested or vestried interests, might be much cheaper. Of the pressure required to project it from twenty to thirty feet skywards wherever a fountain or fountains may be set up, there is assuredly no lack.

Why should English first-class cities as a rule be destitute of ornamental *jeux d'eau*, while Continental towns of the tenth order are for the most part so liberally provided with those pretty and refreshing

contrivances ? Why should London, vaster and mightier than was ever Rome, even at the zenith of her power and glory, be so much worse off than the Eternal City in the matter of decorative fountains ? What hinders her from adorning herself with an equivalent to the glorious Fontana di Trevi, which, seemingly at a colossal Neptune's command, gushes out of the living rock in mid-Rome in countless streams, and rills, and waterfalls—or to the twin splendours of the flashing, splashing jets that play on either side the cross-crowned obelisk facing the portico of St. Peter's Basilica—or to the grand outburst of hidden springs flowing by the roadside in the flank of that Trasteverine hill from whose summit the City of the Cæsars may be surveyed to the greatest advantage ?

Of all European capitals London is the most richly endowed with green and shady oases, to which, however, the charm of rising and falling water—delightful alike to eye and ear—is utterly wanting. If every London square owned a fountain, and were made accessible to the general public once a week, under adequate police surveillance, the open-air attractions of our metropolis would bear comparison with those of most Continental cities, which is certainly not their case at present. During our brief but sultry summers, the cooling effect of five or six hundred spouting, plashing fountains upon the atmosphere of "town" would prove an inestimable relief and refreshment to the population in general. A stately fountain, not thriftily dribbling, but freely and copiously flowing, should occupy the centre of such open places—rendez-

vous of pedestrian and vehicular locomotion — as Regent, Piccadilly, Holborn, and Ludgate Circuses, Hyde Park Corner, the space fronting the Royal Exchange, and many others. Benevolently disposed and wealthy citizens should, either by donation during life or testamentary dispositions taking posthumous effect, provide for the establishment and perpetual endowment of public fountains, at once ornamental and useful.

Old Field-Marshal Wrangel, whom no argument or entreaty could induce during his last quarter of a century to paint the town house he lived in rent free, still loved Berlin so well that he willed to it a handsome and costly marble fountain as well as a fund, with the interest of which will be defrayed, for all time to come, the cost of its regular water supply and incidental repair. A pile of elaborate sculpture, pierced with many water outlets, constitutes the chief ornament of the Graben at Vienna, where the burghers of the Kaiserstadt caused it to be erected at the close of an unusually severe cholera visitation as an abiding token of gratitude to Providence for their deliverance “from a fierce and devouring pest.” Rich Londoners should bear these examples in mind. To relieve their native city of an old-standing reproach, their legacies and subscriptions can hardly be better bestowed than in building and endowing public fountains, which should above all be works of art—not mere utilitarian vehicles for the display of fancy waterworks.

The Feast of St. Lubbock, more commonly known as Bank Holiday, is an essentially British institution. No

absolute equivalent to it, as a period of rest and rejoicing prescribed to the people on purely secular grounds—a commercial interregnum, unavouched for by any religious legend or historical tradition—exists in any Continental country. It is the outcome of English common sense, slow but sure; the concrete expression of the abstract principle set forth in the old saw, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy;” the boon of a prosaic but kindly age to its toiling children, whose weekly day of rest is dulled by Puritanical restrictions and grandmotherly prohibitions. On the other side of the silver streak labour and refreshment are more evenly balanced than they are with us; the struggle for the mere right to exist—which theorists dogmatically pronounce to be inborn in every human being—is not so incessant and fierce as it is in this over-populated realm. The workers, men and women alike, are thriftier in the disposition of their earnings, more firmly resolved to temper their pains with pleasures, and better practised in the organisation of their holiday recreations, than are their Anglo-Saxon fellows. These latter, moreover, find every-day bread-earning life so serious, not to say tragical, a matter, that they experience no inconsiderable difficulty in being genuinely joyous in their hours of ease. The transformation of their mental temper from anxious preoccupation to buoyant light-heartedness, is one too sudden and unnatural for their achievement. A real, unadulterate holiday prompts them to boisterousness, but does not inspire them with gaiety. The outward expression of their enjoyment is often noisy, but seldom cheerful.

In the class which, according to social geology, lies immediately above the operative stratum, it is neither. Care and boredom cloud the brows of the typical British *bourgeois* when he is taking his pleasure. Look at him as he sits in rigid rows, or stalks solemnly up and down the gravel walks in the gardens of one or another exhibition at West Brompton, while military bands discourse sweet music for his delectation, coloured fountains regale his eyes, and Chinese lanterns without number glow like gigantic luminous fruit amongst the green foliage of the surrounding trees. He is silent; he rarely smiles; his features are severely set, as if in mournful protest against the frivolity of the scene. This condition of his—resentful rather than receptive of amusement—is doubtless the result partly of over-work, the subduer of cheerfulness that is common to the middle and lower classes of Englishmen, and partly of certain stiff-necked prejudices against expansiveness of manner and unaffectedness of bearing, which have been transmitted to us by our ancestors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As for the British working man out for a day's holiday, he probably experiences every desire to amuse himself; but his recreative faculty is more limited than is that of the French, German, or Italian operative, similarly emancipated from the restraints of ordinary occupations—most probably because it has enjoyed fewer opportunities of developing itself by practice, and with the aid of encouragement from above, than those accorded to his more fortunate fellow-toiler “in foreign parts.”

As a matter of fact, the classes for whose benefit

Bank Holidays were instituted in this country, are in a great measure prevented from profiting by those intervals in their life-long round of labour, through the infelicitous application of narrow-minded statutes, enacted at different times by our Legislature, under the erroneous impression that they were eminently calculated to keep hard-working people out of mischief. In France, on certain national anniversaries, fairs are held in the public thoroughfares of busy cities, providing an infinite variety of simple but sufficient amusements for the masses, who are as easily entertained as children are. The capitals of Germany and Austria supply vast open spaces, picturesquely wooded and watered, whereupon their humbler inhabitants may hold high revel on statutory and other holidays, less frequent in Calvinistic and free-thinking Berlin than in Catholic Vienna, where saints' days occur, on an average, twice a week all the year round, and too much play proves as demoralising to the operative classes, as too much work proves depressing to London handicraftsmen.

Nevertheless, grave as are the objections to such excessive holiday-making as that which has made the improvidence and dissoluteness of the Viennese proletary European bywords, there are few pleasanter or more animated sights to be seen in the civilised world than the Wurstel or Sausage-Prater on the name-day of some popular saint. Then it is thronged with decently-attired merry-makers, overflowing with natural spirits, prone to laugh heartily at the slenderest of jokes, and taking intense delight in the unsophisticated penny shows set up in double and triple rows on either side

of the superb avenue that stretches away from the Leopoldstadt to the old Danube bed—a holiday promenade nearly two miles in length. Throughout the entire length and breadth of this genuine People's Park, are to be found *al-fresco* *cafés* and leafy beer-gardens, in the latter of which iced Schwechater or Maerzen beer is procurable at a cheaper rate than that charged in our public-houses for salted and soporific London porter. Bright-eyed, dusky-skinned Italians hover about, proferring for sale comprehensive assortments of home-made and imported sausages and cheese; gipsies drive a lucrative trade in prophecy; merry-go-rounds and revolving swings gyrate to the strains of gigantic orchestral organs; seven-headed swine, hairy ladies, and cunning conjurers compete with amazing clamour for public patronage; whilst the rabidly voracious Carribee devours a raw fowl every quarter of an hour or so—for a consideration—and seems to like it. With all these incentives to free indulgence in liquid refreshments, which are as plentiful as they are inexpensive, there is no drunkenness to be seen, or so little, in relation to the numbers of the vast holiday crowds, as to be scarcely worth mentioning. Of dancing, singing, and even romping there is no lack. The fun is fast and furious, but inebriation and fighting are of rare occurrence, being entirely out of keeping with Viennese notions of holiday enjoyment.

Fairs have long since been abolished within the precincts, or even within easy reach, of London. Perhaps wisely, if it be assumed that the tendencies of metropolitan merry-makers prompt them to drink

more than is good for them, when drawn to any particular spot in large masses, and to while away the inebriate hour with that sort of horse-play which readily degenerates into personal combat of a desperate and sanguinary character. However this may be, the fact remains indisputable that there is no spot of open ground in or near this mighty modern Babylon to which a working man—or any other man, for that matter—who takes diversion in peripatetic shows can stroll on any one of his four annual holidays with the certainty of being able to contemplate a display of wild beasts, or to gloat over a wax-works. No travelling circuses are allowed to pitch their huge marquees upon the turf of our parks or commons; no carousels or dancing booths are tolerated in open suburban spaces, as in the roystering old days of Greenwich and Chalk Farm fairs. There is not, to the best of my knowledge, an open-air *café* or beer-garden in all London. Here and there a band plays on highdays and holidays; but listening to orchestral music is dry work for people to whom irregular refreshment is half the pleasure of an outing, and the round tables, wooden chairs, massive beer mugs, and swift waiters of the Continent are conspicuous by their absence from all localities enlivened by gratuitous harmony, even at Easter and Whitsuntide.

It is passing strange that, while foreign Governments generously and sympathetically encourage the people over whom they rule to break now and anon the monotony of their workaday lives by mild outbursts of playfulness, confined within the limits of becoming

mirth, here—in “merrie England,” save the mark!—constituted authorities have for many years past steadfastly done their utmost to check and damp the popular spirits, and to abridge the tale of amusements available to the poorer classes, until next to nothing remains of the robust joyousness that characterised the British “toiler and moiler” of the eighteenth century. How shall the London Bank Holiday-maker—he, I mean, who cannot afford to pay railway and steamer fares for the purpose of visiting places of which he knows nothing, and which are usually even less recreative than London streets—amuse himself on any of the St. Lubbock festivals? No entertainments are afforded to him by the powers who control our parks—in themselves, frankly speaking, dullish places of resort for people who may be assumed to crave for positive pastime. To lounge about the chief London thoroughfares, looking at the shops and instituting comparisons between the various styles of our domestic architecture, is a form of sport that strikes one as likely, after a time, to pall upon those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. It is an unsatisfactory reflection that of all European capitals London should be the poorest in recreative resources at the disposal of those who actually do the greater part of its hard work, and, therefore, stand in far more urgent need of periodical relaxation than their wealthier fellow-citizens.

One of the four annual statutory holidays upon which the working bees of the huge metropolitan hive may visit flowers for their own pure recreation, in-

dependently of any honey-collecting obligations whatsoever, comes off at the very height of summer-tide. It accrues at the sunniest season of the year, when, even in our uncertain climate, vexatiously fraught as it is with startling surprises and distressing disappointments, the chances are rather in favour of fine weather than of its reverse. The hopes of holiday-makers are, fortunately, not always entirely frustrated. Excursionists by thousands do their utmost to enjoy the maximum of relaxation and amusement that can be yielded by the brief period of their enfranchisement from the bondage of bread-earning. Slaves of the lamp and the counter make judicious investment of their slender savings in healthful provision of fresh air. The holiday resorts by the sea and in the countless verdant nooks of our home counties are thronged by emancipate toilers of all classes and conditions, eager to take their fill of such pleasures as are available to them between sunrise and sunset of the rare and precious Bank Holiday.

Those pleasures probably comprise a greater variety of recreations than are indulged in by the inhabitants of any other European country upon similar occasions. But they are also far less co-operative in their character than the holiday amusements of some Continental peoples. The peculiarities of our climate tend to the development of a vigorous and somewhat exclusive individuality in every Englishman bent upon pastime or relaxation. He is deterred from concerting recreative schemes with his acquaintances or class associates, having for their object open-air excursions undertaken

in common, by the circumstance that at no time of the year can he or they reckon with anything like confidence upon the sort of weather that alone renders such expeditions enjoyable. This chronic incertitude necessarily indisposes him to enter into prospective arrangements, involving considerable preparation and some outlay, which, when completed and made binding upon himself and his holiday confederates, may be stultified by some dismal vagary of our amazing climate. He is thrown upon his own resources as an organiser of whatsoever amusement may appear feasible to him, the weather being really the supreme regulator of his plans, and is compelled to observe, with respect to the formation of his pleasure programme, the principle laid down for the guidance of lovers by the old axiom, "Every man for himself."

As a matter of fact we work harder, and under more discouraging climatic conditions, than our Continental neighbours, who devote a far greater portion of their life-time to amusement than we care, or indeed can permit ourselves, to spare from the labour which alone enables each one of us to stand his ground on the battle-field of life. Less exclusively absorbed than Englishmen in the achievement of that desideratum, which with us takes precedence of many urgent considerations to which it should be secondary, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and Scandinavians are far more highly skilled than we are in the organisation of their amusements, and indulge in them far more lavishly than we do. Even the oppressed and down-trodden Russians and the semi-civilised inhabitants

of Europe's eastern frontier lands enjoy more frequent opportunities of holiday-making than are available to the free-born denizens of these islands. The secularising tendency that has of late years made itself manifest in the legislation of constitutionally-governed Catholic countries has considerably curtailed the number of annual licensed holidays, upon which the operative classes were legally entitled to abstain from work. Not a dozen years ago sixty or seventy such holidays, exclusive of the weekly Sunday, were prescribed by the Roman Church to the subjects of the Austrian Emperor, and found general observance. Four-fifths of these fête-days have lapsed into desuetude since the revision of the Austro-Roman Concordat was forced upon the Imperial Government by a Liberal majority of the Austrian Parliament. But the Austrians are still enthusiastic and persistent holiday-makers, faithful to the sports and pastimes practised by their fore-fathers, and contented to be governed stringently and expensively, so that their recreations be unrestricted by despotic ordinances and vexatorial supervision.

How large a part in the open-air and indoor pleasures of their sultry summers and hard winters is allotted to music never fails to astonish the Englishman or the Frenchman who may chance to sojourn for any considerable time in the realm of the Double Eagle. The Austrian Germans, for so many centuries the dominant and fashion-giving race in the Eastern Empire, have contrived to inoculate their fellow-subjects of other nationalities with their own fondness for sweet sounds

and ambition to penetrate the mysteries of the “gentle science.” Part-singing and orchestral associations flourish exceedingly in the remotest provinces of the Dual Realm. From these and other societies and clubs, constituted for the promotion of harmony and the dissemination of musical knowledge, spring an infinite number of holiday organisations to which the families of members are almost invariably admitted. Thus hundreds of thousands of people belonging to the middle and working classes are enabled to participate in amusements intelligently devised and arranged for them by organisations the very *raison d'être* of which is the diffusion of innocent pleasure. Similar institutions abound in every part of Germany, from the flat shores of the Baltic to the lofty ranges of the Alps and the Vosges. To stroll about in a leafy wood, in convenient proximity to which, deposited in cool cellarage, lies good store of long-necked bottles and rotund casks, and therein to sing amatory or patriotic choruses or to dance interminable waltzes upon the greensward, is the favourite recreation of the German petty tradesman, clerk, or operative during the fine-weather days of the spring, summer, and autumn months. His winter amusements are equally simple and harmless. But, summer or winter, he will not be denied them, and willingly sacrifices time and money to obtain them.

Music, vocal and instrumental, enters less conspicuously into the holiday recreations of the Latin and the Slavonic races than into those of the Teuton and the Scandinavian. The Italians have their fairs, in the booth marvels of which they dearly delight, their

cheap extramural circuses and carrouses, and their open-air theatres, to which the prices of admission are almost nominal, although the performance frequently attains a high degree of artistic merit. The Spaniards have their bull-fights and innumerable varieties of national dance—each Spanish province, and even many a country town, has its special dance, to which its inhabitants are passionately addicted—and are, moreover, as ardent supporters of the drama as their Ausonian kinsmen. The Rouman takes his outdoor pleasure chiefly in dancing the “hora,” a gymnastic exercise of a somewhat monotonous character, which nevertheless appears completely to meet the recreative views of the dusky-complexioned peasants who claim descent from Trajan’s legionaries. Lads and lasses—the latter frequently of extraordinary beauty, and arrayed in the most picturesque costumes imaginable—clasp hands and form a circle round a couple of wild-looking gipsies, who produce inconceivably dismal sounds from the primitive pipes affected to this particular class of performance, and, at a given signal, commence a series of hopping and swaying movements which they keep up without intermission for hours at a stretch. In this pastime, varied by the singing of old robber-stories and fairy tales in an unknown number of verses, slowly droned out by professional *laotari* or minstrels, Roumanian men and women of the people spend their frequent holidays. Like Italians and Spaniards, they indulge with the strictest moderation in alcoholic and fermented liquors, and regard an habitual drunkard with equal horror and scorn. Indeed, the Continental holi-

day, except in Russia and Poland, is distinguished from the British holiday by the high standard of sobriety among those who observe it, as well as by their good humour and lack of quarrelsomeness. Perhaps these latter characteristics are the offspring of temperate habits, and the "sadness" with which Froissart alleged that Englishmen amused themselves may result from over-indulgence in intoxicating drinks. Anglo-Saxon pleasure-seekers would do well to consider whether or not some foreign holiday omissions as well as practices may not be worthy of imitation in this country.

## EASTER OBSERVANCES.

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SOME years ago I met, in one of the pleasantest "international" *salons* of the Kaiserstadt—not the pale and dismal city on the Spree, which has arrogated to itself that Imperial *sobriquet* ever since the 18th January, 1871, but the splendid capital of the Austrian Empire—an uncommonly cheerful and bright-looking gentleman of middle age, who was evidently the lion of the party, a somewhat cosmopolitan one, at which a score or so of nationalities was agreeably enough represented. He first attracted my attention by the extraordinary fluency and idiomatic correctness with which he was conversing in English with the then British Ambassador at the Court of Vienna; and I subsequently had occasion to observe that he appeared to be equally familiar with every tongue spoken in a society which had been recruited from the four quarters of the globe. Politician, philologist, and *homme de lettres*, this gentleman had been everywhere and seen everything. He had twice circumnavigated the globe, taken part in an Arctic Expedition, ascended Dhawalagiri, and made the overland journey from Pekin to St. Petersburg. Long residence in England had given him an insight into our national customs

and characteristics rarely acquired by aliens to our soil. His word-sketches of English life were at once graphic and epigrammatic. Few of our salient peculiarities had escaped him.

A celebrated English traveller was present, whom he had met in all sorts of out-of-the-way places upon the Asian and African Continents. Commenting upon the strange *rencontres* recalled to his memory by the sight of Captain Burnaby, he remarked that he had never, whilst in England, thoroughly realised one of the most striking anomalies of English character. "Englishmen in their own country," he went on to say, "impress the foreigner as inseparably wedded to their homes. When I lived amongst them I thought they were certainly the most domestic people in the world. But I found out my mistake when I began my wanderings. Whithersoever I travelled, there I found Englishmen, who were generally on the point of going somewhither else! The Englishman likes nothing so well as to be 'on the move.' Wherever he may happen to be, an instinct peculiar to him suggests that he should promptly convey himself to another place, and so on *ad infinitum*. This is why the Easter Observances in England differ essentially from those of every other Christian country. At Eastertide the English celebrate the Festival of the Railway Companies. Easter in Russia is the Feast of the *vodki*-sellers; in Germany, of the tailors, for everybody buys new clothes; in Italy and Spain, of the clergy; in France, of the toy and bonbon vendors; in Roumania, of the *laotari*, or gipsy-minstrels; but

in England the symbol of Easter is not the egg, the fish, the hare, the kiss, the brand-new surtout, or the fiery dram, but the Excursion Ticket, which enables every Englishman to gratify the dearest wish of his heart, viz., to 'go somewhere else !' When two Englishmen meet on Easter Day they do not greet one another with 'Surrexit !' 'Vere surrexit !' or any other phrase appropriate to the anniversary, for they are in too much of a hurry to do more than nod, lest they should miss their respective trains."

Like my polyglot acquaintance, whose Easter definitions I have ventured to quote, my lines were for many a long year cast in foreign lands, the Paschal customs and observances of which were at the time I refer to far more familiar to me than those of my own country. The origin of many of these practices, as well as the history of the symbols associated with them, is lost in the mists of antiquity, and, for the most part, nobody inquires into the meaning of the forms observed or gifts exchanged at Easter time. Throughout Europe, in particular, I have found a strong feeling prevalent, prompting people of all classes to comply with the Easter customs handed down to them by their forefathers, under a notion that the performance of certain actions and utterance of certain phrases at that season will "bring them luck." This quaint belief in "luck," which is as deep-rooted and lively in the philosophical German professor as in the crassly ignorant Russian peasant, lies at the bottom of all the odd observances that prove such inexplicable puzzles to Englishmen resident in northern Continental realms.

It is, moreover, a noteworthy fact, probably susceptible of being accounted for upon psychological grounds, that the number and variety of Easter customs is considerably greater in countries where the predominant religious creed is that of either the Reformed or the Greek Orthodox Church, than in those acknowledging the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff in matters connected with the guidance of the human soul.

In Northern Germany, for instance, the giving and receiving of the Easter egg are characterised by *nuances* which do not obtain in France, Austria, Italy, or Spain. The head of the family provides mimic eggs, made of sugar or marchpane, if intended for subsequent consumption, and of chalk or plaster of Paris, when bestowed as symbols pure and simple, upon every member of his household, servants included. But it is essential to the luck-bringing character of these donations that they should not be directly given, from hand to hand, to the persons for whom they are destined. They must be "found," or the spell is naught—to which end it is of course necessary that they should be previously hidden away by the donor. Every domestic circle in Prussia, therefore, becomes on Easter Eve the scene of a mysterious and elaborate family conspiracy, into which the children are admitted by their parents, secretly and severally, as participants in the plot against themselves and the servants. Within this chief parental plot lies another, or sub-plot, of the children, devised for the mystification of "Väterchen" and "Mütterchen," whose Easter eggs, the result of a joint subscription organised by the little ones, must be discovered by

them in the places of concealment deemed most recondite by childish ingenuity. Easter Day, therefore, witnesses a series of more or less arduous enterprises, with thrilling fluctuations of triumph and defeat. No sympathetic music, or other guide to detection is permitted, for the obvious reason that its employment would invalidate the "luck" to be derived from the finding of the egg. Infantine indiscretions are nervously guarded against by the elders as far as precaution is practicable where youngsters eager to reveal are concerned. Not to find the egg allotted to one by Destiny is considered an augury of evil fortune for the ensuing twelve months.

But the egg is not the only "luck-bringer" to the efficaciousness of which popular superstition in Prussia pins its faith at Eastertide. The swift and timorous hare has been, from time immemorial, associated with Paschal observances by the natives of the Mark, Brandenburg, Pomerania, and both Borussias. "Lampe's" connection with Easter luck probably springs from some venerable tradition or legend of Wendish folk-lore; I have never been able to trace it to its actual source in the existing Sagas, but many erudite Germans have attributed the "Hare-worship" (*Hasen-cultus*) of the sandy plains skirting the Baltic to a Pagan rite of the wild Wends. Counterfeit presentments of the hare are sold by the hundred thousand in Prussia proper at the Paschal season, and will be found on Easter Day in every habitation, from the Emperor's study to the artisan's garret. Few people are so utterly at odds with the world as to find themselves forlorn of a hare of some sort when "Resurrection Sunday" dawns. The material

most commonly employed in the manufacture of the Easter hare is chocolate. The smallest of leverets can be purchased for the third of a penny, so there is no excuse to the poorest for neglecting the "custom." But Nuremberg hares, frequently as large as life, and exquisitely modelled, are expensive gifts, necessitating an outlay of many marks. Like the mechanical eggs and fishes current in wealthy German society at "Ostern," they are recipients of dainty sweetmeats and choice candied fruits—hollow from scut to nosetip. A dreadful hybrid has of late years appeared in the Berlin Easter markets and shops—a monster defiant of all known classification laws, subversive of the Darwinian theory, and infinitely perplexing to the student of animated nature. This is an astounding combination of the two leading Easter symbols—a nondescript creature, half hare, half egg, which plunges the spectator into a dire doubt, never to be resolved by any trustworthy authority, as to whether the hare is hatching the egg or the egg producing the hare from a tenancy in itself inconceivable. Together with the hare and the egg, or with both in one, as contrived by German thrift and weirdness in the case of the hybrid last alluded to, a Prussian subject, if he have set his heart upon securing a twelvemonth's allowance of uninterrupted good luck, must consume on Easter morning a slab of a peculiarly repulsive and indigestible cake, hight "Pfefferkuchen," or pepper-cake. The origin of this rite is as obscure as that of the "Hare-worship." Between the outside chance of a year's bad luck and the awful certainty of a pound of Pfefferkuchen, most Englishmen's choice would be unhesitating.

## THE TRIUMPHS OF SMOKE.

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SMOKING, at the present day, is well-nigh as universal a human practice as eating, drinking, or sleeping. Until very lately it was hampered in this country by restrictions innumerable, written and unwritten, and its votaries were constantly at odds with legitimised by-laws and social prohibitions limiting their indulgence in the fragrant weed to certain localities and hours of the day and night in a fidgety and sometimes vexatious manner. These restrictions, however, have in many cases been done away with altogether, and in others so intelligently modified as to afford but little solid ground for complaint to the most inveterate consumer of tobacco. Not to hark back any farther in the history of British smoking than the period just preceding the Crimean War—little more than thirty years ago, in fact—men still in the prime of life will distinctly remember that at that time it was considered “snobbish”—the epithet “bad form” had not then been invented—to smoke a cigar in the street; and an Englishman having any pretensions to gentlemanly breeding and position would as soon have thought of crying “Cats’ meat!” in the Barbican as of puffing

a meerschaum or cutty on the shady side of Pall Mall. Railway companies made no special provisions for smokers in connection with their rolling-stock. Being on a journey by rail it was only possible for the traveller to smoke under toleration of his fellow-passengers, or by bribing a guard to lock him up in a compartment by himself.

Not only was after-dinner smoking out of the question in private houses inhabited by ladies, but it was not allowed in the principal London restaurants. Even a well-known ordinary in the Strand, though it sprang from a cigar-shop and called itself a divan, forbade its guests to smoke where they had dined, and sent them upstairs, after their meal, to a dismal back-room, if they were bent on toying with a post-prandial regalia and cup of coffee on the premises. There was not a single London theatre that could boast of a smoking saloon within its precincts, nor a public dining-room to which a *fumoir* was contiguously attached. Men—even those strongly addicted to the weed—seldom smoked in their own houses, the female prejudice against the after-scent of tobacco running remarkably high in the early “fifties.” They conveyed their pipes and pouches, their “puros” and cigar-cases—cigarettes were all but unknown to English smokers in the præ-Crimean days—to clubs, public and private billiard-rooms, or the chambers of some bachelor friend, for the most regarded with distrust and suspicion by the partners of their joys and sorrows. At the conclusions of their vaporous orgies, before returning to homes undefiled by the fumes of burnt

bird's-eye or calcined cavendish, they generally made some laudable, if ineffectual, effort to purify their breath and garments from the rank and lingering nicotian reek. As a matter of fact, thirty years ago the majority of married men belonging to the better classes of English society smoked, so to speak, under protest, whilst the parents and guardians of Cœlebs regarded his use of tobacco as a formidable symptom of dissipated habits, although his younger female acquaintances usually contrived to put up with it, for reasons best known to themselves.

In the words of Molière's immortal medical reformer, "we have changed all that." Smoking has overcome, one by one, all the social barriers formerly set up to retard its triumphal entry into our domestic life, and now asserts its sway in at least half the houses occupied by well-to-do Britons. Cigars appear in the dining-room after—not infrequently before—the ladies have left it, and that insinuating libertine, the cigarette, sometimes makes his way up to the drawing-room, where he has been even known to undergo affectionate pressure by the lips of the fairest of the fair. Smoking is authorised in restaurants, theatres, and railway carriages, subject to certain provisoies by no means onerous or prejudicial to comfort. Club smoking-rooms, once the Ishmaels of committee-men, shabby, forlorn, and relegated to the most inconvenient and inaccessible regions of the club-house, are now amongst the most luxuriously furnished and decorated apartments in the gorgeous palaces of Club-land. With the exception of churches and concert-rooms there are few public places

of assembly in which some sort of practical consideration, taking the form of accommodation, is not displayed on behalf of the inveterate smoker's requirements. Ladies favour the "soothing practice" as conspicuously as they were once wont to discourage it; the learned and liberal professions all smoke, copiously and persistently; the clergy no longer denounce tobacco as an invention of the Evil One, provocative of idleness, unnatural thirst, scepticism, and all manner of other baneful tendencies. Men of the highest rank and fashion are not in the least ashamed of being seen in public places with a cigarette, cigar, or even a glossy briar-root in their mouths.

He who does not smoke at all is a "quantité négligeable" in his way — the infinitely rare exception to a rule obtaining such general observance amongst Englishmen of every social condition, that smoking has of late become an integral habit of their daily national life. They are not, perhaps, as far advanced in the official countenancing of tobacco-smoke as some of their Continental neighbours, whom constituted authorities justify in regarding every locality of public frequmentation, and every vehicle of locomotion, as a place to be smoked in by prescriptive right, unless conspicuously fitted out with prohibitive notices. Germans, Austrians, Italians, Russians, and—in a lesser degree—Frenchmen smoke in their restaurants, cafés, and railway coaches as a matter of course. In the majority of Viennese omnibuses even there is a "Rauch-Coupé," constituting an entire moiety of the portly and leisurely "Stell-wagen" that conveys thousands of passengers daily between the

town and the suburbs of the Danubian Empire-city. Though Britons do not as yet smoke inside their omnibuses, however, nor in their restaurants during meal-times, they may fairly be reckoned amongst the most steadfast and profuse consumers of tobacco amongst European nations, and have certainly rid themselves, from a "society" point of view, of their whilom prejudices against the most agreeable of stimulants and sedatives—for both these varieties of comfort are imparted by the judicious use of nicotia—with all the thorough-goingness with which every true Anglo-Saxon is proud as an ancient and approved characteristic of his masterful race.

Even when those prejudices were most rampant in this country, English institutions specially affected to the accommodation of our aristocracy in their hours of leisure and recreation exhibited a far kindlier tolerance of smokers' tastes and fancies than has, down to the present day, been displayed by Continental institutions of a similar character. At no time during the Victorian age has the committee of any London club ventured to dictate to its members what sort of tobacco they shall incinerate within the four walls of their smoking-room, or what particular description of receptacle they shall utilise for conveying the growths of Virginia, Maryland, and the Havana to their lips. What Englishman has ever seen posted up on the walls of a club *tabagie* a notice to the effect that "members are strictly prohibited from smoking pipes in this room"? Not one, I confidently believe; nor is it in the least probable that such an impertinent and oppressive regulation would be

complied with for a moment by any of our fellow-countrymen. It has, however, obtained in many of the more fashionable clubs abroad ever since those places of rendezvous secured a footing in the leading cities of the European main-land. Although German gentlemen, during the period of their life passed at the university, are almost invariably powerful and continuous pipe-smokers, they confine their smoking at their clubs, as a rule, to cigars and cigarettes, and a pipe is never seen, even in the military and sporting casinos of Berlin or Vienna. It is no less uniformly tabooed in the best clubs of Italy, Spain, and Russia, where the apparition of a meerschaum or "short clay" would scarcely awaken less surprise and consternation than that of a seven-headed fiery dragon.

In Paris, even, the Continental head-quarters of English social customs and of fashions attributed to our "high-life"—locally pronounced in such sort as to rhyme accurately with fig-leaf—the question whether a man who prefers a pipe to a cigar should be permitted to smoke the former on the premises of his club-house has quite recently been gravely discussed by the committees of the principal Lutetian *cercles*. In all probability this important issue will ultimately be decided in favour of the pipe-smoker, who, it seems, has been borne with for some considerable time past in more than one distinguished Parisian club. Great astonishment was manifested on one occasion, four or five years ago, at the famous Jockey Club, when an English member produced his favourite pipe from his pocket after dinner, calmly lit it, and proceeded to smoke it with imper-

turbable enjoyment. The example set by this insular innovator was not followed to any great extent by the members indigenous to French soil; but it made its mark, and was the starting-point of a languid movement in favour of abolishing pipe-disabilities at some future epoch of the club's history. That epoch, it would appear, has arrived, or nearly so; and Englishmen affiliated to Continental clubs, whose name is legion, may look forward confidently to a period when they will be able to smoke their pipes in Parisian, Roman, Viennese, and Florentine clubs—I am doubtful about Berlin—without violating any by-law, shocking any native member, or transgressing any understood but unexpressed canon of polite society.

## TOOTHACHE.

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WITH the exception of an uneasy conscience or a curtain-lecture there are few such efficient antisoporifics as the toothache. It is an incessant, unremitting anguish, every quick-succeeding throe of which carries with it a hideous refutation of the theory endorsed by those ingenious pathologists who would fain have us believe in the “periodicity of pain.” There is nothing periodical about a first-class toothache. When once it has fairly seized its appointed victim in its clutch, it continues to torture him with unrelaxed malignity, robbing him of his rest, docking him of his food, altering the outline of his countenance by adding to it curves which are far from being “lines of beauty”—in short, playing the very mischief with him in body and mind until, his sufferings having become absolutely intolerable, he hurries off to the dentist’s “laboratory,” there to pass one of the worst “mauvais quarts-d’heures” of his existence. For the most part, fortunately, the desperate remedy afforded to his malady by the glittering forceps results in perfect “surcease of sorrow.” As soon as the offending molar or bicuspid has been extracted from its inflamed and

throbbing socket he may, with Macbeth, joyfully exclaim, "Why so, being gone, I am a man again!" The dexterous wrench has freed him from the dread terrors of those sleepless nights throughout which, "being troubled with a raging tooth," he tossed and turned miserably, or sate up clutching his hair in desperation, or wildly arose and paced the room, half-maddened by the conviction that nothing but death or the dentist could do him any good, and that the less final solace of the two was utterly unattainable at, say, four o'clock in the morning.

During such a vigil of torment as this, when the racked nerve is doing its level worst to "murder sleep," each minute seems an hour, each hour a week. Love and hope, duty and responsibility are forgotten and are as naught for the time being. The whole power of attention with which a vigorous intellect is endowed concentrates itself upon the spot in which a mere filament, temporarily put out of gear, so to speak, is working ineffable woe to the delicate organisms connected with it.

Of all the ills that flesh is heir to, toothache is probably the most depressing to the spirits. The man afflicted with a gouty toe is fiercely indignant and savagely aggressive. He often finds relief in wrathful expletives. When anybody—even a bluebottle—indiscreetly approaches the agonised member his language is "painful and frequent and free."

On the other hand, he upon whom one of his teeth has declared war *à outrance* soon becomes the prey of settled melancholy. He is the original "poor soul"

who sits “a-sighing”; and “Willow, willow!” is, perhaps, about the most appropriate sentiment to which he could possibly give utterance, under the circumstances. The heroine of Desdemona’s mournful ballad lived before the days of anæsthetics and highly advanced dental surgery. No wonder that she sate all huddled up and moaning, “her head on her knee,” or that “her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones.” That is an attitude often assumed by martyrs to toothache, even at the present time, although the copious resources of modern science are at their disposal for the alleviation of their “shrewd distress.”

That particular branch of the surgical art known as dentistry has, indeed, of late years, attained many developments of an extraordinary and highly noteworthy character, especially in the United States, where its study has been pursued with exceptional assiduity. American dentists enjoy a world-wide renown for expertness and success in the practice of their profession. There are few towns of importance on the Continent of Europe in which one or more of these skilful gentlemen may not be found, occupying a leading position amongst practitioners of their special category, and earning considerable incomes by attending to the teeth of their adopted compatriots.

More than one American dentist has been admitted to the confidence and friendship of European Monarchs, and received conspicuous marks of Imperial and Royal favour. Some years ago an eminent dental surgeon of Transatlantic origin, established in Madrid and enjoying the patronage of the Spanish Court, shared

with a famous Berlinese patentee of extract of malt and with a wealthy Viennese manufacturer of fire-proof safes the enviable distinction of possessing the insignia of more Orders of Chivalry than had ever before been conferred upon any commoner. Another accomplished American dentist, who, during the Second Empire, had been a constant and ever-welcome guest at the Tuileries and Compiègne, stood gallantly by the Empress Eugénie in the day of danger, when the *déchéance* of the Napoleonic dynasty was declared shortly after the catastrophe of Sedan, and, at the risk of his own life, assisted Her Majesty to escape from Paris.

In far St. Petersburg, Constantinople, and Bucharest, graduates of one or another American Dental College number political and social celebrities among their patients or "clients," and are received upon a footing of equality in the most exclusive circles of society. As a rule they are men of liberal education and polished manners. Their curative feats frequently border on the marvellous, for they rarely resort to extraction, except in extreme cases of decay or accidental injury, but excel in the repair of damaged teeth, and in the treatment of diseases affecting the human jaw and its ivory armament. The main object steadfastly kept in view by American dentistry appears to be the conservation of the masticating apparatus bestowed upon us by Nature. Only when that apparatus falls into a condition rendering it practically worthless for the purpose it was originally intended to fulfil, does the dental surgeon of to-day reluctantly

consent to its removal, mercifully rendering that operation painless by the aid of "laughing gas" or ether spray, and promptly substituting for the discarded *râtelier* a set of artificial teeth in every respect its superior. When the indigenous "grinder" can be saved, dentists spare no pains and ingenuity to preserve it, being of opinion that the worst way of dealing with a tooth is to pull it out. They are past masters in the art of stopping, fixing loose teeth, removing injurious growths from their roots, destroying nerves, and even of extracting faulty teeth, remedying their defects, and replacing them in the jaw with such treatment of the gum as fully reinstates them in their pristine efficiency. All these and other wonders—for instance, the substitution of a perfect tooth, drawn from a healthy jaw, for a decayed tooth—are now performed by scientific dentists of all nationalities, the initiative in the majority of such surprising innovations being due, it is generally admitted, to the fertility of Transatlantic inventiveness.

According to a recently published statement, American dental surgery, not content with its many splendid achievements in the way of "changing old teeth for new," has taken an entirely new departure in that direction, and, as it is reported, with complete success. Some time ago a socket for the reception of a new tooth was gouged in a jaw whence a decayed tooth had been extracted long previously. Then a perfectly sound natural tooth, having been soaked in bichloride of mercury, was inserted in the socket thus formed, and allowed to "take root" therein. This tooth settled

down in its new quarters with singular firmness—so the story runs—and shortly became as serviceable to its landlord as if it had grown upon the premises. Still more wonderful to relate, a tooth implanted in this novel manner was subsequently withdrawn and submitted to microscopical examination, in order to settle a question that had arisen as to whether circulation had been established between the gouged socket and its tenant, or whether the firmness of the latter had only been effected by the grip upon it, artificially superinduced, of the soft tissues of the gum. It is asserted, as the result of this somewhat ruthless experiment, that the tooth in question was so well and strongly rooted as to offer quite an uncommon resistance to the act of extraction, and that, in point of fact, such force had to be exerted by the operator in pulling it out as to break it.

If this strange narrative be founded on fact, mechanical sets of teeth, removable at their owner's will, and always worn with a certain amount of discomfort, will soon go out of fashion amongst the wealthier classes. People who can afford to pay heavy fees to dental surgeons of paramount skill, and to compensate the possessors of healthy teeth for the pain and inconvenience of parting with them "for a consideration," will assuredly adopt the implanting process, by which their jaws will be as permanently and ornamentally refitted as though Providence had vouchsafed to them a third spontaneous growth of sound natural teeth. Physical suffering, in connection with dental operations, has already been to a great extent obviated by the judicious use of anæsthetics, so that the only obstacle,

no matter at what age, to taking a new start in life, as far as one's masticatory mechanism is concerned, will be a pecuniary one. The implanting process, moreover, will lend itself conveniently to the fancy for ornamenting the front teeth with diamonds, which is said to have "caught on" of late in an upper stratum of New York society. In a word, this latest American innovation, if correctly reported, can scarcely fail to revolutionise the dentist's *praxis*.

## LOVE'S ALIBI.

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AN alibi, in legal parlance, is a statement on oath going to prove that a person accused of malfeasance was, at the time when the dereliction laid to his charge was committed, actually, and in the flesh, elsewhere, or, from a Parliamentary point of view, "in another place." As nobody can be in two places at once—except a bird, according to the late Sir Boyle Roche—evidence of this particular description, if adduced by a credible witness, is usually held to be conclusive, and, as a matter of fact, has, in hundreds of cases, saved innocent people from the clutches of the law, not to mention a few guilty ones here and there.

When the defendant in the memorable suit of "Bardell *versus* Pickwick," crushed under an overwhelming weight of circumstantial testimony, was cast in heavy damages, although blameless as the unborn babe, Mr. Weller, senior, deplored to his son that sad misprision of justice, ejaculated mournfully: "Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a *alleybi*?" The simple-hearted Jehu's faith in the saving potency of an alibi was boundless. Within his own personal experience its efficacy had been crucially tested, and found absolute.

A timely alibi had rescued from the hangman's hands one of his intimate friends, a coachman of renown, standing "within danger" of the gallows, when some judicious hard-swearers left the jury no choice but to acquit him.

In these days of ours, so much gentler and kindlier than the so-called "good old times," the prisoner generally gets the benefit of the doubt, whenever conflicting evidence is brought to bear upon his or her alleged criminality. That culprits, perhaps as frequently as wrongfully accused folk, profit by modern mercifulness is very probable; but the majority of Englishmen are of opinion that it is far preferable to let off half-a-dozen rogues than to condemn one honest man. Hence the alibi, submitted to the consideration of twelve "good and true" Britons, duly empanelled and shut up in a jury-box, generally secures a verdict of "Not Guilty" in favour of the person on whose behalf it can be preferred.

Such was once—not so very long ago—its effect in the case of four crofters, indicted at the Edinburgh Justiciary Court for having taken part in the proceedings of a riotous mob which had pulled down a boundary fence at a place called Galston Farm, and assaulted the police with bludgeons. Evidence was brought forward to prove that these men, with one exception, had been slumbering peacefully in their respective beds at the very hour when the disorderly conduct attributed to them had taken place. The exception was a youthful crofter named Saunders, a native of Barvas, in the Isle of Lewis, near to the scene of the rioting in question. Whilst the territorial limits of Galston Farm were being

rudely violated he was not asleep, like his companions in the dock, but was engaged in pleading the cause of Love to the object of his affections. A young woman deposed that Saunders was a suitor for her hand, and that on the night of the disturbances he had been paying his addresses to her from midnight until half-past four in the morning. In conformity with the "custom of the country," with respect to "courting," she had shared her mother's couch, whilst Saunders, "in his habit as he lived," had reclined on the ground by the bedside, "whisp'ring soft nothings in her willing ear." The romantic character of the situation thus described stood its hero in good stead; for the jury, after a brief deliberation, acquitted the nocturnal wooer, his alibi having been, in their opinion, satisfactorily substantiated.

It would seem that the "courting custom" in the Princess of Thule's realm is to a certain extent cognate to that which still obtains in some parts of the Welsh Principality under the suggestive designation of "bundling." Many of old Cymry's swains do their wooing after nightfall, and in an eminently secluded style. When the labours of the day are over, and "the children are asleep," young Dafydd noiselessly ascends to fair Gwyneth's chamber, and there, with such eloquence as he can dispose of, urges her in subdued tones to "name the day." Were she not in some measure disposed to listen favourably to his suit, he would probably not be admitted to so private and confidential an audience as that accorded to him "in the stilly night" by the maiden of his choice. Hence, as I have been informed, Welsh courtships of this curiously intimate nature

generally lead to marriage, and "all's well that ends well." Perhaps the matrimonial arrangements that result from such primitive love-making turn out, on the whole, more happily than those which are the outcome of formal negotiation, carried on by the parents or guardians of the parties principally concerned, as in France, Italy, Spain, and the majority of Oriental countries. Two young people who have passed many nocturnal hours together in loving conference, emancipated from the watchfulness of papas and mammas, maiden aunts, and *enfants terribles*, are more likely to have acquired some mutual knowledge of each other's characters and dispositions than are a bride and bridegroom who, down to their wedding-day, have only met in the presence of their respective families, and, in all probability, have never even addressed one another by their Christian names.

The French *mariage de convenance*, which is by no means confined to the upper classes of society, but is a national institution, equally in vogue among the *bourgeoisie* and peasantry, would seem to have been devised for the propagation of social immorality and human unhappiness. By its fruits, as they are graphically described in French dramatic and fictional literature, it may fairly be judged. The plots of ten out of every twelve French plays and novels turn upon the harshly creaking hinge of conjugal infidelity, which, however carefully and delicately oiled by plausible sentimentality or grace of literary style, never revolves quite smoothly and inoffensively to the English ear. To the French playwright and writer of romance it

appears to be a matter of course that husbands should be conspicuously unfaithful to their wives, and that wives should break their marriage vows with more or less secrecy and regard for public decorum. As the salient virtues and predominant vices of a people are unquestionably reflected in the mirror of popular literature, one may confidently assume that matrimony is not universally a happy state in France ; and it cannot be doubted that marriages concluded by bargain, instead of by mutual inclination, are mainly accountable for that grave and deplorable national misfortune.

In Germany courting is for the most part a lengthier process than amongst peoples of Latin origin and traditions. Long engagements are the rule rather than the exception. Hans usually falls in love with Gretchen, who fondly returns his passion, when he is an unfledged student or apprentice, and she a budding "Backfisch"—the German equivalent for our "bread-and-butter miss." The youthful lovers are too practical, as a rule, to contemplate marriage at an early date ; but they give their respective parents no peace until the latter have consented to their betrothal, which frequently lasts for several years, and not uncommonly "eventuates" in each of them marrying somebody else. A German betrothal is a far more formal and solemn affair than an English engagement. The ceremony of exchanging rings is performed before witnesses, and ratifies a tie between the affianced persons which is legally binding until superseded by that of matrimony, or dissolved by mutual consent. In case of the death of either party during its validity,

it confers certain rights of inheritance upon the survivor. Hans and Gretchen not only call one another "Du," but take rank of intimacy in each other's families on the "thee and thou" footing. They go to theatres, concerts, and parties together; it is not etiquette to invite either of them anywhere without the other.

Throughout the East, on the other hand, family arrangements are in the ascendant, and boys and girls, betrothed ere they have entered their teens, have no voice whatsoever in the decision which dooms them, whether suitable to one another or not, to pass the greater portion of their lives together. Hard bargains are struck between their parents—often through the medium of a professional negotiator—presents are interchanged, as well as flowery compliments in profusion, and the transaction concludes with the wedding of two children who do not know one another by sight, and who, after the ceremony, are separated until they attain the age of connubial maturity. With relation to these preposterously early marriages, which are the fashion among Eastern Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Brahmins, and Fire Worshippers alike, there is, of course, no question of courtship, in the Occidental interpretation of the word, any more than there is in the method of acquiring a wife adopted by the Equatorial negro, who buys her from her father for so many beads or cowries, or by the South African Kaffir, who bids for her in horned cattle, a bullock at a time. Personal courtship, in short, is an outgrowth of Western civilisation. Some of its varieties, such as those prevalent in the Island of Lewis and the Principality of Wales,

for instance, strike the prosaic English mind as eccentric and, possibly, a thought risky ; but if they lead to the blissful union of fond hearts, they may perhaps be pronounced, in spite of all their little drawbacks, more conducive to human felicity than the occasionally sordid *pourparlers* that precede a French, Italian, or Spanish marriage of convenience.

## FIGURATIVE TERMS.

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“WHAT’S in a name ?” once asked the greatest poet whom the world has ever known. A confirmed generaliser might answer this broad question not inaptly in three words: “Everything and nothing.” Names were invented for human convenience; the special import of each of them is due to association; like all mundane institutions, they are liable to abuse. For instance, “Call things by their right names” is an axiom that does not hold good in Southern countries, where exuberance of spirits and exaggerated notions of politeness suggest the description of things not as they really are, but as the person describing thinks his hearer might like to hear them described. The florid style of language that grows out of this genial desire to please is admirably exemplified by Alexandre Dumas in one of the thrilling Roman episodes of “Monte Cristo.” “Does it please your Excellencies that the carriage be driven up to the steps of the Palace ?” says a *facchino* to Albert de Morcerf and Franz d’Epinay; the “Excellencies” being two young French tourists, the “carriage” an ordinary Italian cab, and the “Palace” that singularly unpretentious hostelry the *Albergo di Londra*, on the *Piazza di Spagna*.

A similar hyperbolical habit, born of excessive courtesy, prompts the Austrian civilian, when conversing with an officer of the Imperial Army or Navy, to confer brevet rank upon his interlocutor, whom, if a lieutenant, he addresses as "Herr Hauptmann," or, if a captain, as "Herr Major" at the very least. In Prussia this flattering practice does not obtain to any considerable extent, the North German being a stickler for exactitude in so momentous a matter as titular recognition. Perhaps it is more rampant in Spain than in any other Continental country; for throughout the Iberian Peninsula, in declining to comply with the street-beggar's solicitation for alms, the customary form of verbal excuse is, "Pardon me, your worship, for the love of God;" nor will any less polite deprecation disembarrass the passer-by of an importunity that is often so harassing as to embitter existence.

In China hyperbole imparts a peculiarly quaint and racy flavour to social colloquy; for it inspires the well-bred Celestial not only to overstate the dignities and merits of the person with whom he is conversing, but to understate his own. Thus he will differentially ask after the health of his visitor's son and daughter, alluding to them respectively as "monument of wisdom" and "star of loveliness"; and, interrogated in return respecting his own children, will reply apologetically, "My poor rat of a son and squalid worm of a daughter still presume to breathe." The fervid Oriental imagination runs riot in the invention of honorific predicates and complimentary epithets. Not to exaggerate in either of these directions is to be lacking in common civility,

whereas the judicious use of magnificent misnomers is generally accepted as a proof of high breeding and elegant education. The polished Oriental seldom allows himself to be betrayed by temper, surprise, or carelessness, into the employment of phraseology that is simple and realistic. Florid artificiality is his conversational ideal, and his efforts to attain it are as continuous as they are painstaking.

Of late years the habit of descriptive exaggeration has become acclimatised in Occidental countries, and has found expression in many harmless and amusing misapplications of words with well-established and received meanings to things absolutely incongruous to them. In France, it would appear, the noun “château” has for some time past been subjected to an abuse of this kind, which is becoming chronic, more particularly in the immediate neighbourhood of Paris. Beyond doubt, there is a growing tendency to dub even the pinchbeck villas which are springing up all round the metropolis with the pretentious title of “château.” Parisians who own modest little country-houses, in which their families, during the summer, take refuge from the glowing heat of the boulevards, often announce their intention of spending a few days “in villeggiatura” by saying “I am going down to my château.” They thus convey to their hearers’ minds the idea of a vast turreted building, with crenellated walls, drawbridges, machicoulis, and frowning gateways, surrounded by a deep and more or less slimy moat, in which venerable carp with gold-ringed snouts and huge eels wallow and wriggle with the ponderous

gravity that becomes their reverend age and advanced obesity. Such is the Parisian's "château" in the abstract, as he wishes it to present itself to the mental vision of his friends and acquaintances. In the concrete it is sometimes an unassuming ten-roomed villa, or a "cottage with a double coach-house—a cottage of gentility."

One fateful Wednesday morning in the year of Grace, 1888, the owners of innumerable such "châteaux" were stricken with panic by the announcement that the tenements dignified by that imposing style and title were about to be subjected to special taxation. Had the enforcement of this humorous fiscal measure been really contemplated by the Republican authorities, as was for a few hours generally believed in Paris, it is more than probable that the châtelains and châtelaines of many a suburban "castle" would have altered the nomenclature of their holiday retreats with amazing promptitude. The word "château" would have magically vanished from their gate-posts and vocabulary alike, and they would have been heard to speak with cheerful humility of their "maisonnette de campagne," their "châlet," "cabane," "chaumière," or, perhaps, even "hutte." The proposed tax on castles, however—fortunately for their proprietors—turned out to be something in the nature of a mare's-nest.

It seems that about two years ago a law was passed in virtue of which steps are being taken to ascertain whether or not country-houses pay their just proportion of "contributions" to the State exchequer.

No exceptional measures are to be introduced by which castles will be submitted to heavier or more immediate fiscal pressure than semi-detached villas, cottages, or pleasure-shanties of the modest dimensions favoured by Parisian boating-men—tiny hermitages rarely constructed for the accommodation of more than two hermits at a time. The terrors of an imaginary peril have subsided as swiftly as they arose, and the proprietors of châteaux in the *banlieue* breathe again.

This queer fashion of conferring high-sounding titles upon commonplace dwelling-houses has recommended itself during the present reign to a good many middle-class inhabitants of these islands. In his delightful “Irish Sketch Book,” Thackeray recited with infinite relish the “fine names” bestowed upon their dilapidated villas and tumble-down cottages by the summer residents in Kingstown and the semi-rural outskirts of Dublin city. The suburbs of our own metropolis teem with small abodes, leased at rents of from forty to eighty pounds a year, and rendered ridiculous by designations ludicrously out of keeping with their size and architectural character. It is more than sufficiently absurd to christen a cheap cottage, fronted by a garden twenty feet long, “Cawdor Lodge,” or “Cholmondeley House”; but even loftier heights of incongruity are reached when a tenement of that class puts forward a legible claim to so soaring an appellation as “Beddgelert,” “Plinlimmon,” or “The Hawk’s Nest.” Scarcely less nonsensical are the names bestowed upon some conspicuously modern country-houses by the *nouveaux riches* to whom they owe their construction. It is by no means uncommon

for persons who have amassed handsome fortunes in trade to build for themselves extremely comfortable mansions within easy reach of town, and to dignify them by the title of "Court" or "Grange," "Abbey" or "Priory," tacked on to some impressive predicate smacking of feudalism and a stirring historic past. The houses themselves are often models of convenience, fitted up with every sanitary appliance devised by science, lavishly decorated within and without by skilled artists, and environed by picturesque grounds and gardens brilliant with carefully tended flowers. Nothing is wanting to these admirable residences—more numerous in England than in any other European country—to make life easy and even luxurious to their fortunate occupants; conservatories, bath-rooms, billiard-rooms, well-stocked libraries, good collections of pictures, cellars stocked with choice wines—all these and many other accessories of wealth and good taste are to be found within their precincts. Each one of them is in itself an epitome, so to speak, of nineteenth-century civilisation; and to call it an Abbey or a Grange, to which it bears no outward or inward resemblance, is to be guilty of a deliberate anachronism. The Courts and Priories of olden days were, no doubt, eminently suitable to the manners and customs of the nobles and ecclesiastics who built them and lived in them; but they were utterly forlorn of the comfortable contrivances with which modern country-houses abound, and which have made those perfectly appointed dwellings justly famous throughout the four quarters of the globe. To borrow a pregnant phrase from one of Charles Reade's most powerful and instruc-

tive fictions, and said to be borrowed from Voltaire, "Soyons de notre siècle." If we must give special names to our houses, a custom which is superfluous in towns but convenient enough in the country, let us christen them in conformity with their appearance and residential character, instead of saddling them with absurd misnomers.

## THE INDOLENT TURK.

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DURING an inquest held some months ago upon the body of a gentleman who had died whilst in a Turkish bath, from sudden failure of the heart's action, the Coroner for Central Middlesex addressed some well-meant advice to the proprietor of the establishment in which the mishap alluded to had taken place. The deceased person, it appears, having informed one of the bath attendants that he felt unusually drowsy, lay down upon a bench, and slumbered tranquilly for about two hours. At the end of that time it was noticed that the sleeper was breathing heavily. He was at once removed into the cooling-room, where he almost immediately expired. Referring to these facts, to which the evidence adduced bore testimony, the Coroner observed that, according to his experience, it was "most dangerous" to permit persons to go to sleep in a Turkish bath. He knew that for a man denuded of his garments, and in a profuse perspiration, to lie down and sleep was a "most seductive" proceeding. "This," he continued, "is all very well for the indolent Turks, but not for bustling Englishmen." The Coroner further expressed the hope that the proprietors of Turkish baths would instruct

their attendants to awaken any client whom they might at any time perceive to be asleep; for, should such a person feel faint, he—being suddenly aroused—could call the attendant, who, in many instances, could save bathers' lives by dashing cold water in their faces.

This monition, conveyed to the manager of the Turkish bath in question with, doubtless, the best possible intentions, would probably, if carried into effect by the attendants of that or any similar establishment, result in a falling off in the number of its customers that could not but seriously affect its commercial prosperity. Many business men, whose nerves are highly strung all day long by the anxieties of competition, and whose nocturnal rest is too frequently broken by the remembrance of unlucky transactions during the past twenty-four hours, or by anticipations of difficulties threatening for the morrow, frankly admit that the only perfect sleep they ever enjoy is that vouchsafed to them whilst reclining in the tropical atmosphere and soothing semi-obscurity of a moderately heated room in a Turkish bath. There, lulled to rest by the faint sound of trickling water and the glimmer of “light that counterfeits a gloom”—undisturbed by any noise louder than the soft tread of a bare-footed ministrant, and disembarrassed of all its habitual sumptuary restraints—the weary body lapses into a blissful condition of absolute repose, and the overwrought brain—its tension mercifully relaxed for the nonce—is refreshed by a brief interval of dreamless oblivion. To men of highly nervous temperament frequenting the Turkish bath the spell of trance-like slumber obtainable there, and there only, is simply

priceless ; and one of the completest pleasures of their lives would be marred—indeed, abolished altogether—were that excellent somnolence invariably to be interrupted, whenever it should assert its sway upon their eyelids, by the warning voice or grip of an attendant charged with the grim and thankless duty of awakening sleepers. Had the Coroner for Central Middlesex, in commenting on the circumstances attending the demise of Mr. James Francis, taken occasion to point out, with all the authority derived from his official position and medical experience, that persons suffering from disease or weakness of the heart should steadfastly refrain from indulging in the relaxations of a Turkish bath, all sensible men would have hailed his timely utterance with unqualified approbation. It is obviously incumbent upon every individual to abstain from practices, however agreeable, which may prove fatal or even injurious to him in particular, whilst they may be productive of infinite benefit and enjoyment to others differently constituted from himself. This obligation, however, is a purely personal one, and by no means justifies any public functionary in calling upon the proprietors of bathing establishments to interfere with the comfort of their customers, or to prohibit these latter from participation in that which, to at least half their number, is the most enjoyable part of the elaborate process undergone in a Turkish bath, that is, perfect unbroken slumber.

Exception, moreover, may fairly be taken to one of the learned Coroner's remarks, which only refers indirectly to the sanitary aspect—or its converse—of a

nap in a heated room. From his point of view, that variety of slumber is "all very well for the indolent Turks, but not for bustling Englishmen." Putting aside the assumption, which appears curiously unreasonable, that absolute repose is less appropriate and solacing to busy, restless people than to those of idle and lazy habits, serious objection may justly be raised to the application of so sweeping a term of disparagement as "indolent" to one of the most industrious, persevering, and thrifty nations in Europe and Asia—a people remarkable alike for its courage, energy, and patience under the pressure of adversity. The average Turk of agriculture and commerce, who constitutes ninety per cent., at the very least, of the Padishah's subjects, is very hardly dealt with by a large number of worthy people in this and other countries who know nothing whatever about him, and whose notions concerning the Osmanli are based upon travellers' tales and other reports that have reached their cognisance, recounting the turpitudes of the corrupt Stambouli and the self-indulgence of mushroom provincial Pashas and petty officials, the creations of hareem intrigue and bureaucratic venality.

All manner of unpleasant epithets have been lavished on the imaginary Turk, who owes his fictive being to misrepresentation and ignorance. At different times, and by Englishmen whose word has carried conviction with it to uninstructed minds without number, the Turks have been dubbed "reactionary," "barbarous," and even "unspeakable." Lastly, a London Coroner, moved to indignation by the accidental decease of a respectable ratepayer in a Turkish bath, has designated

them one and all as "indolent." Generalisation of this dogmatical kind is really somewhat old-fashioned and out of date in so enlightened an age as that in which it is our privilege to live. In the early years of this century, before steam and telegraphy had vanquished time and distance, and enabled the leading nations of the world to become tolerably familiar with one another's characteristics and customs, the majority of Englishmen firmly believed that frogs formed the chief staple of a Frenchman's diet; that Germans fed exclusively upon sausages and sauerkraut; that every variety of Italian battened daily upon macaroni; that Spaniards somehow contrived to subsist, sparsely but fragrantly, upon garlic; that the ordinary Russian was accustomed to dine upon a pound or so of tallow candles, and "ask for more"; and that every Turk worthy of the name had at least half-a-dozen wives, smoked chibouques from morning to night, spent half his time in the bath, did nothing for his living, and was chronically liable to the bowstring.

I, for one, had fondly thought that recent developments of the means of international communication, and the spread of instructive literature, which, of late years, has placed trustworthy information respecting foreign countries and peoples at the disposal of the humblest British reader, had effectually scotched, if not killed outright, the greater number of these dull old myths. Such, however, was manifestly not the case when a metropolitan functionary of high position and generally recognised ability could deem himself justified in stigmatising a whole nation as indolent. Englishmen,

happily still notorious throughout the habitable globe for their love of fair play, will assuredly hold one of themselves excused for endeavouring to rebut so uncalled-for an accusation. Every unprejudiced Briton who has had personal experience of provincial life in the Ottoman Empire will testify that the Turkish peasant is the most hard-working, sober, continent, and orderly man of his class in Europe; a model of laboriousness, honesty, and general good conduct which the agricultural populations of Western realms would do well and wisely to copy in their own habits and behaviour. Apathetic Pashas and do-nothing Effendim cannot be held to represent the industrial capacity of the Osmanli more accurately than parochial officials, or even coroners, typify the intelligence of Englishmen.

During the past half-century—more particularly since the termination of the Crimean War, Anglo-Saxons of well-nigh every profession and social class have been brought into contact—in larger numbers and more intimately than the natives of any other European country—with the Turkish people, whose heroic valour, single-hearted patriotism, and almost sublime endurance of one of the worst systems of government that ever afflicted mankind have changed what used to be a semi-contemptuous liking on our part, based upon political expediencies, into a genuine national sympathy and admiration. It may therefore be considered peculiarly inapposite and unfortunate that an unmerited reproach should have been addressed to a race for which the majority of my well-informed fellow-countrymen entertain a sincere and well-founded esteem,

by the voice of a distinguished public official, exercising important functions in the very heart of the metropolis, the inhabitants of which, taken one with another, may be assumed to possess a more accurate acquaintance with Turkish characteristics than that hitherto acquired by the denizens of any other European capital, save and except Constantinople only.

## A PANACEA.

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MESMERISM, electro-biology, and other alleged developments of psychic force acting upon the nervous system of persons exceptionally susceptible of such influences, have hitherto made themselves manifest to the world at large rather as curious and perplexing experiences illustrating certain mysterious powers of mind over matter, than as physical agencies fraught with distinct and definite utility to mankind. Cases have been duly authenticated, and have found record in the annals of medical and surgical science, in which sufferers have been temporarily relieved from acute pain by being plunged into the mesmeric trance, and have even, whilst in that condition of apparently suspended animation, undergone distressing operations with as perfect a freedom from anguish as though they had been rendered unconscious by the effects of some potent anæsthetic. These beneficent applications of the mesmeric fluid to the mitigation of human suffering, however, have been comparatively speaking few and far between, and have not as yet been officially adopted by the faculty into its hospital or private praxis.

Mesmerism has been abundantly discussed and exemplified on the lecturer's platform and in scientific *salons*, without achieving any result of paramount importance. Under its spell delicate and slightly built girls have performed feats of strength that would have done credit to professional athletes. Men and women of unimpeachable sincerity, beyond suspicion of any complicity in deception, have been constrained to subordinate their five senses to the dictates of mesmerists, in whose inexplicable thraldom they were bound for the time being, and have, at the will of these latter, committed extravagances of action and speech of which, in their normal condition, they would have been utterly incapable. Others, again, have become "clairvoyants" under the influence of magnetic "passes," and have described places which they had never seen with the eyes of the flesh, and occurrences of which they could not possibly have had personal cognisance.

Putting aside the fact that all these unexplained wonders—like those of spiritism and of the natural magic that has been practised for centuries past by Oriental adepts—lead to nothing in particular, and have, therefore, hitherto only awakened a passing interest in serious thinkers, it is undeniable that the marvels of mesmerism have been utilised as "spécial attractions" by the most expert conjurers of modern times, to which circumstance may be attributed the prevalent tendency to class them with the more ingenious tricks of prestidigitation. Which of us has not seen the fair confederate of some eminent wizard,

whilst in a state of suspended sensibility, professedly mesmeric, submit impassively to the thrusting of pen-knives through the fleshiest part of her arms, or to the dropping of melted sealing-wax on the palms of her hands? Which of us has not been amazed by the correctness of the information elicited from "clairvoyants" respecting the number of a watch, the date of an ancient coin, or the device of a signet ring to which the "subject" under treatment had indubitably had no access when she described them with faultless accuracy? Achievements of this kind, seemingly prohibitive of collusion, are surprising beyond measure, no doubt; yet, after having witnessed them with undivided attention in some place of public entertainment, we go home profoundly puzzled, but none the less unconvinced that the laws of Nature, as we have been taught them, have suffered interruption at the hands of the particular necromancer whose performances have enabled us to pass our afternoon or evening in a highly recreative manner. Taken in connection with the programme of a "magical matinée" or "supernatural soirée," mesmeric experiments have established their claim to public consideration by affording amusement to uncounted thousands. When, however, seriously put forward by earnest men as phenomena subversive of belief in well-established physical laws, they have been set aside by the majority of reasoning beings as lacking in practicality of purpose.

It would appear that this cardinal objection to the recognition of mesmerism as a distinct branch of phy-

sical science is now in a fair way to be permanently removed. Several leading French surgeons and medical professors have for some time past been engaged in carefully studying the effects of mesmerism on the female patients of the Salpêtrière Hospital, in which hysterical and hypnotic complaints are said to be more frequently dealt with than in any other Parisian infirmary. M. Babinski, a clinical surgeon attached to the establishment in question, lately carried out a series of experiments, the results of which held forth good promise of opening up new and valuable developments of medical science. The object of these experiments was to prove that certain hysterical symptoms could be transferred from one patient to another by magnetic agency. In one instance M. Babinski selected two "subjects" from among the inmates of the hospital—the first a dumb woman afflicted with hysteria, the second a female actually in a state of hypnotic trance. A screen was placed between these two invalids, and the hysterical woman was then subjected to the influence of a powerful magnet. At the expiration of a few seconds she was rendered completely dumb, and simultaneously the faculty of speech was restored to the hypnotic patient. Temporary cures of paralysis were also effected by M. Babinski in a similar manner; that is to say, by the aid of the magnet he succeeded in transferring paralytic symptoms from one person to another in whom they had not theretofore manifested themselves, thereby for a time freeing the genuine paralytic patient from her malady.

Fortunately for those of his patients upon whom he

thus inflicted the diseases of their neighbours, their borrowed pains did not last long, whilst the relief imparted to the original sufferers proved to be of an enduring character. It stands to reason that the accomplished Parisian surgeon, having taken away a pain or the cause of a pain, from a human being, did not employ magnetic force to put that pain back again ; and in all probability the person into whose body the pain was transplanted, so to speak, by artificial means, was not constitutionally receptive of the particular variety of disease giving rise to that pain, and so threw it off in due course by a simple effort of nature. Assuming the published account of M. Babinski's experiments to be substantially correct, it must be admitted that no more astonishing or important discovery than this novel method of applying magnetic force to the cure of "ills that flesh is heir to" has been made since M. Pasteur endowed his fellow-men with an approved remedy for, or antidote to, the horrors of hydrophobia.

In days when mesmeric, hysterical, and other pathological or psychological phenomena play so prominent a part in the plots and action of fictional works, it cannot but be eminently satisfactory to the practical mind to find them, for once in a way, connected with concrete and demonstrable fact. The authors of innumerable ingenious novels, from "Elsie Venner" to "Doctor Jekyll," have built up more or less coherent and plausible fabrics of narrative upon the foundation of real or imaginary abnormal conditions of the "human microcosm." Magnetic force, or the power of volition, which some eminent writers appear to regard as inter-

changeable terms, inspired Bulwer Lytton to construct two of the most blood-chilling tales extant—"A Strange Story" and "The House and the Brain"—and suggested to Edgar Allan Poe more than one of the weird and gruesome fancies underlying his inimitable romances. It did not occur, however, even to these great fantastic geniuses, or to the gifted literary godfathers of the "materialised spirit" who occupies so distinguished a position in several popular fictions of the day, to conceive the possibility of transferring dangerous illnesses from one living person to another by magnetic agency. When Dr. Jekyll desired to convert himself into Mr. Hyde, he drank up a mixture of his own compounding, which had the property of changing his tissues, features, weight, and stature in so thoroughgoing a manner that even his most intimate friends were compelled to take him for somebody else. The agent, however, by which this surprising transformation was periodically achieved was a mere combination of drugs after all—something material, tangible, visible to the naked eye, and therefore not nearly as unrealisable to the ordinary intellect as the impalpable, unseen force by the employment of which M. Babinski has made the dumb speak, and has transferred paralysis from one of his patients to another.

Wonders like these are fraught with abundant food for speculation as to further marvels, as yet unrevealed, to the disclosure of which their future developments may lead. If magnetism can already change the local habitation of a mortal malady or infirmity, may it not in the fulness of time be induced to perform similar functions with respect to moral qualities and personal

characteristics? May we not live to see the magnet imparting steadfastness of purpose to an unstable disposition, or tempering inborn solemnity by a judicious infusion of agreeable frivolity? A force that could impart benevolence to the congenital miser, valour to the constitutional coward, truthfulness to the confirmed liar, and philanthropy to the inveterate misanthrope, would go far towards converting this vexed and troubled world of ours into an earthly Paradise. Unless, indeed, it created a state of things so comically embarrassing as that depicted in Mr. Gilbert's "Creatures of Impulse," in which the possibility here hinted at was anticipated several years ago. It may be hoped that M. Babinski's admirable discoveries will, sooner or later, show him and his fellow-experimentalists the way to "minister to a mind diseased," as well as to relieve the suffering body of chronic and heretofore incurable ailments.

## OBJECTIONABLE POSTERS.

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THE vigorous vindication of public decorum that took place some months ago in a well-known Welsh watering-place aptly illustrated the truth of the Immortal Bard's dictum, to the effect that "the evil that men do lives after them ; the good is oft interred with their bones." That the late Lord Byron was a great poet and brilliant humourist is indisputable, nor can it be denied that from his early boyhood to the day of his premature death he manifested a high-souled hatred of oppression and generous sympathy for the oppressed ; but his ethics were far from unimpeachable, and his morals left a deal to be desired from what may be designated as the "middle-class point of view." One of his works in particular—that most characteristic of his genius, and universally acknowledged to be his masterpiece—has been especially fraught with offence to unnumbered worthy people. It has borne fruit, moreover, which, even in these tolerant days of ours, reveals itself from time to time as an apple of discord, causing respectable persons to transgress the limits prescribed to moral indignation by the law of the land. Had not Byron written "Don Juan," it may safely be assumed that

some light-hearted caterer for the lovers of daring burlesque would not have concocted a frivolous travesty of that remarkable poem under the title of *Little Don Juan*. An artist, graphically inspired by the familiar axiom, "Beauty when unadorned's adorned the most," would not have designed nautch-girls all but forlorn of even "robes loosely flowing." The manager of a travelling operetta company would not have placarded the town of Llandudno with representations of these undraped charmers, attractively displayed on huge coloured posters, and eminently calculated to raise a blush to the cheek of Mr. Podsnap's typical "young person." A local lady "of strong religious views" would not have been inflamed with indignation, prompting her to tear down these placards with her parasol from the dead walls and hoardings to which theatrical enterprise, incorporate in the bill-sticker, had affixed them. An injured impresario would not have sought to recover damages from this impulsive moralist for the destruction of his property; in short, the case of "Shine *v.* Keen" would never have been tried at all, and the plaintiff and defendant would alike be better off, by no inconsiderable sum, than they actually are at the present moment. For law is an expensive luxury, and the case in question was the outcome of a previous trial, with the result of which the plaintiff's discontent had been such as to stimulate him to institute further proceedings.

This is the age of advertisements, and no less boldness than ingenuity characterises the pictorial announcements by means of which purveyors of all

sorts of commodities, from a cake of soap to a dramatic entertainment, call public attention to the manifold attractions or special excellence of their wares. There are manufacturing and trading firms in this country which expend from twenty to forty thousand pounds per annum upon depicting the products of their industry or the articles in which they deal ; and the fact that they continue to do so, year after year, goes far to prove that such illustration is highly remunerative. A great variety of objects and attractions meet the eye, so to speak, at every street-corner, in the guise of flaming posters and flaring scenes, and in all sorts of unexpected positions, above and under ground. Art has been dragged neck and heels into the service of the bill-sticker ; its creations, more or less highly coloured, dazzle us from the inside of the omnibus roof, and lurk between the scaffold poles of new buildings. The portraits of fair women who stand pledged in black and white to wash themselves throughout life with a particular kind of saponaceous tablet, or to use no other scent until death but that to the super-excellence of which they have once for all committed themselves, huge monsters smoking cigarettes or taking snuff or tasting pickles, are "sprung" upon us in railway stations and on the surface of lofty hoardings. Does a new melodrama contain a more than usually thrilling "situation" in the shape of a gruesome murder, appalling shipwreck, or heartrending abduction, straightway a terrific presentation of the sensational incident in question breaks out on every available surface of our capital like a

pictorial epidemic of crime and horror. Some of the gigantic posters that teem in public places set forth sights eminently calculated to freeze the young blood and make "each particular hair to stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine." The nude torso of an ill-favoured athlete, grimly emblazoned with a circular plaster, emblematical of congestion, or with a crimson heart, significant of pine-apple rum, is a discomfiting object for delicate persons to encounter of a sudden, as they turn a corner or emerge from a railway carriage. There are moments, too, when the contemplation of a squalling baby's reluctant ablutions palls upon the most confirmed father of a family, and awakens in his breast an immoral desire to drain a flowing bowl to "the immortal memory of good King Herod."

It may well be that the uncompromising moralist who wielded her parasol with such destructive effect at Llandudno, whilst "making an example" of *Little Don Juan's* counterfeit Lolahs, Katinkas, and Dudùs, was a thought over-particular in her abstract notions of propriety, and untimely oblivious of the wise theory that "to the pure all is pure." She represents, however, a widely spread feeling of dissatisfaction with the vulgarity, not to say coarseness, of many of the "art-posters," illustrated playbills, and descriptive placards that stare unsophisticated women and girls out of countenance in the highways and byways of large English towns—advertisements which, it may frankly be admitted, are rarely indecent, but which are too frequently horrible and, in nine cases out of ten,

devoid of artistic merit. Whilst gazing on the monsters that cleave to London hoardings and assert their claims to attention with a malignant persistency that will not be denied, every art-loving inhabitant of this metropolis must wish that some sort of censorship could be established to which such outrages upon form and colour should be necessarily submitted before being inflicted upon the public, and which should be invested with legal power to restrain their promulgation, whenever they should present any manifestly offensive or repugnant feature. A distinguished Royal Academician once urged that these illustrated advertisements should be brought under the influence of the highest art of the day, and more than one very eminent painter has acted on his suggestion, and lent his pencil to the advertiser's needs. Placards, of course, are private property, although their aim is publicity of the widest and most conspicuous description ; hence no individual, however keenly he may be aggrieved by their aspect and meaning, has a right to tear them down or deface them. As the law stands, their aggressiveness is uncontrolled whilst retaliation is forbidden to those whom they insult. This does not seem quite fair to the aggrieved sufferer, who is surely entitled to some protection from the steadfast and cold-blooded persecution of his dumb, implacable tormentors. It is just as inexcusable to shock the moral sense of piously disposed ladies by indelicately suggestive posters, or to generate hideous nightmares in the brains of over-sensitive artists and children by colossal representations of deadly affrays and gory duels, as to scare horses out of their wits by huge

advertising vans, painted in garish colours and swooping along the streets with terrifying velocity. As has already been observed, this is the age of advertisements ; but if one might venture to offer some seasonable counsel to pictorial advertisers on a large scale, such advice would perhaps be most appropriately tendered in the terse old Latin adage, "Ne quid nimis"—freely translated, "Don't overdo it."

## GERMAN FIELD-SPORTS.

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IN Germany, the hunting, or, more correctly speaking, the shooting of large game is almost exclusively the sport of Kings and Princes, a recreation only shared with those august personages by the elect of society, invited by their Sovereigns from time to time in virtue of their illustrious birth or exalted official rank—or, haply, as a mark of special Royal favour and distinction—to assist at the gigantic battues organised every autumn and winter on one or other of the vast family domains owned by the hereditary rulers of the Fatherland. Such a gathering of grandees, during the reign of the first German Emperor, was annually held at Koenigs-Wuesterhausen, an estate belonging to the House of Hohenzollern, some three miles distant from Berlin, and historically celebrated as the favourite resort of Frederick William I., who held his famous “Tobacco Parliament” sessions in a ground-floor room of the old-fashioned, unpretending country house immortalised by Thomas Carlyle in his “Life of Frederick the Great.” In that quaint Jagd-Schloss, or hunting-box, where the Old Dessauer, Seckendorff, Grumkow, and other saturnine worthies were wont to gather round their eccentric

master, smoking good Knaster in long Dutch pipes and moistening their own stiff clay with thin claret and small beer, the King of Saxony — described on a memorable occasion by the venerable Emperor as “the best general in the German Army”—and many other illustrious personages were frequently the guests of a Monarch who was himself as keen a sportsman as he was a mighty warrior. Nothing short of indisposition so severe as to justify his being strictly forbidden, on the part of Lauer or Langenbeck, to expose himself to cold and fatigue, deterred the stalwart old Kaiser from taking part in the battues annually arranged at Wuesterhausen, Letzlingen, or the Goehrde, for the necessary thinning out of the herds of deer and droves of wild swine with which those Royal preserves are so abundantly stocked. His Majesty, until a late period of his long life, was an excellent shot, and, as due care was taken by his foresters that plenty of good chances should be afforded to him for displaying his skill with the breech-loader, he invariably made a first-rate bag. All the male members of his family, with the exception of Princes George and Alexander, who are equally indifferent to military exercises and to the pleasures of the field, are ardent and accomplished sportsmen, as, indeed, are most of the reigning minor Sovereigns in Germany. Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg is a veritable latter-day Nimrod, one of the greatest living authorities upon the “Waidmann’s Kunst,” or art of veneerie. The shooting in his magnificent woods and preserves enjoys a European celebrity among sportsmen born in the purple. Germany, in its northern and southern regions alike,

abounds in vast tracts of forest, for the most part State property, and under the control of a highly trained class of officials, Royal, Ducal, or Princely foresters, as the case may be. Moreover, forestry, in the Fatherland, is a science more assiduously cultivated than in any other European country. It is taught in academies specially founded and endowed for that purpose; and its practice is productive of large State revenues, as well as of the splendid shooting enjoyed by German Royalty and its guests.

Teutonic notions of sport differ from those generally entertained and carried out in these islands; but the Germans are good and assiduous sportsmen for all that. As a rule, they hunt big game not on horseback, but on foot. To ride after a fox or a hare across country is a recreation absolutely unknown in the Fatherland, except by hearsay. Doubtless many Germans have read in books of travel or in newspapers about foxhounds and harriers; but, unless they happen to have travelled in Great Britain or Upper Hungary during the hunting season, they have most assuredly never set eyes upon living dogs belonging to either of the above-mentioned categories. Owing to the minute subdivision of landed properties among small farmers throughout four-fifths of the Empire, and to the peasant's unconquerable jealousy of his proprietary rights, the German nobleman or gentleman cannot hunt the fox after the English manner if he would. But he experiences no desire whatsoever to practise that particular variety of sport, which, indeed, he regards as a senseless and ridiculous waste of power and time, attended by

risks altogether incommensurate to the object aimed at or the pleasure enjoyed. The fox, from his point of view, is a noxious and destructive beast, to be shot as vermin "wherever found." To organise and keep up an expensive establishment of hounds and horses for the purpose of hunting such an ignoble quadruped as the "red rogue," dear to every English sportsman's heart, would never suggest itself to the mind of a thorough-bred Teuton; nor does there, to the best of my knowledge and belief, exist a single pack of foxhounds within the territorial limits of Germany.

Foxes, however, of great size, strength, and comeliness abound in the Fatherland, and contribute their quota of victims to powder and shot at every battue on a large scale, being driven past the shooting stands, at convenient range, in company with deer, boars and their formidable families, hares, not infrequently wolves, and other wild four-footed denizens of the forest. All Reynard's cunning avails him naught when his favourite haunts are encompassed round about on every side, and swept clean, so to speak, of their living contents by the beaters of the Treibjagd, the method of collecting and driving game most prevalent in Germany. The converging Treiber, with dreadful clamour, urge him remorselessly onwards, as well as his sylvan fellows, furred and bristled, to some broad glade or clearing, commanded by the guns of the sportsmen at a range of from forty to a hundred yards. Across this fateful space sooner or later he finds himself compelled to scamper at top speed for dear life; and it is but seldom that he escapes, scot-free, the concentrated fire

of three or four pairs of barrels aimed at him by such unerring marksmen as the Princes and nobles, clad in green and gray, who occupy the choice stands at a Royal battue. It is the custom at these parties to use a rifle for firing at deer or wild boar; but keepers are in attendance upon each illustrious sportsman with loaded smooth-bores ready to hand for such minor contingencies as foxes or hares. A hundred deer, fallow and red, twice as many swine, and five or six hundred head of smaller game is no uncommon bag for such a day's shooting as that which the first German Emperor delighted in offering to his kinsmen and friends—kingly sport indeed, invariably wound up by a splendid repast at the nearest shooting lodge, and a torchlight review of the game killed by the Imperial Amphitryon and his august guests.

Such is the German Treibjagd as practised at the present day in the Royal preserves situated in various provinces of the Prussian monarchy. Except with respect to the precision and carrying power of the arms at present in use for sporting purposes, it differs in no essential respect from German hunting of the feudal age, when sport was even more exclusively confined to the ruling class than it is in these levelling times. A conspicuous exception, however, to the general rule of driving game at Royal "hunts" is afforded once a year, on St. Hubert's Day, by the State *chasse-à-courre* held in the extensive woods belonging to the Prussian Crown in the picturesque district that lies between Spree and Havel. Upon that occasion, observed in Berlin, Potsdam, and the intervening villages as a popular holiday,

the German capital is half emptied of its male inhabitants, who flock by thousands upon thousands to the Grunewald and its adjacent forest tracts, in order to catch a glimpse or two of their Kaiser, arrayed in scarlet, white cords, and irreproachable tops, and accompanied by all the members of the Royal Hunt similarly attired, following the hounds in pursuit of a boar culled from the famous "Sau-Bucht," near Glienike, and turned loose in the woods surrounding a venerable but diminutive jagd-schloss, in which, at the conclusion of the day's sport, the annual Hubertus banquet is held with all manner of quaint rites and ceremonies handed down from the olden time.

The whole affair is a State pageant, of the brilliant and picturesque spectacular order, rather than a boar hunt. To begin with, the element of danger to life or limb is eliminated by the special preparation of the boar selected from the Royal preserves to furnish an afternoon's amusement to the Emperor and his Court. That luckless animal is captured about a fortnight before St. Hubert's Day, and subjected to the singularly painful operation of having his tusks sawn off short—a process which exercises so depressing an effect upon his spirits that, were it performed on the eve of his *début* in the hunting-field, no pursuit of dogs, horses, and men would induce him to budge a yard from the spot at which he is set at liberty. Time, therefore, is allowed him to recover himself, and as he has been chosen, from among several hundred eligible pigs, for his strength and swiftness, he generally gives hounds and huntsmen a tolerably good run of from thirty to

forty minutes, it being his privilege to receive a quarter of an hour's law. The woods through which the Royal cortège follows this ill-used grunter, more commonly at a slow trot than at a gallop, are thronged with Berlinese, who greet the Emperor with shouts that render the cries of the pack inaudible, and are wont to give a hearty reception to the Grand Veneur, riding at his left hand. On the whole, there are few prettier sights not of a strictly military character in Germany than the Hubertus Jagd on a fine November day, when the Kaiser and his Court set forth in state to hunt the tuskless boar.

## COMMUNITY OF PROPERTY.

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By a vast number of enthusiastic persons, profoundly convinced of the justice of their views, the division of property in equal portions amongst the sons of men is held to be the one thing needful for the achievement of universal human happiness. These generous theorists, who seldom possess any property of their own to speak of, and may therefore be assumed to contemplate the prospect of a partition of other persons' wealth with a hopeful rather than a mournful eye, are of opinion that the man whom inheritance or industry has endowed with a competence seriously wrongs every one who happens to be less well off than himself. "Property is robbery," is one of their fundamental dogmas—that is to say, the property which is not theirs. This principle, together with one or two others of equal practicability, has found outward and visible expression in several sanguinary revolutions, which have turned society topsy-turvy, swept away some few class-distinctions, and altered the tenures of real estate with a fine, refreshing disregard for law, custom, and tradition which, as far as it went, cannot but have given considerable satisfaction to the theorists in question. But

it never went quite as far as they would have had it go, could they at any time have induced a national majority to carry out their doctrine literally and exhaustively.

Republics—even Reigns of Terror—never succeeded in abolishing property. They displayed great vigour and perseverance in taking it away from those to whom it belonged, and offering it for sale to those who had no money wherewith to buy it; the eventual result of this magnanimous procedure being that property again fell into the hands of the well-to-do, and that the relative proportions between rich and poor remained practically what they had been in days antecedent to these social cataclysms.

No less difficult to realise in action than this interesting principle enjoining the “division of property” has proved that which prescribes “community of property” as the panacea for all human ills. Charles Fourier, one of the most gifted Frenchmen of his period, built up a magnificent system of utility, virtue, and bliss upon the foundation of this latter phrase. The Phalansterians, whom he saw plainly enough with his mind’s eye, were to do everything imaginable for one another, and enjoy the fruits of their labour in common. Their work being all interchangeable, they would be enabled to dispense with the illogical tokens called money. The physical well-being and moral felicity they would derive from this arrangement would in time develop in them capacities and even organs of a far more advanced character than any at present possessed by the most civilised human beings. Fourier foretold

that Phalansterians would in time grow a tail sufficiently long to be utilised as a great-coat in the winter-time, coiled round the body, and as an umbrella or parasol in rainy or sunny weather, spirally convoluted above the head. German State Socialists have quite lately set forth the advantages of the Phalanstery with thrilling eloquence, although they do not promise such large physiological developments as the French philosopher did. But the Germans of to-day, it would appear, are no riper for the “community of property” than were the Frenchmen of sixty years ago; so that, as a rule, property continues—in those and other countries—to belong to the few instead of to the many, and “all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds.”

To this rule, however, exception must be made in favour of any member of a religious brotherhood owning or inhabiting a French monastery. A Gironde jury, at least, some time ago, returned a unanimous verdict to that effect, much to the surprise and indignation of the presiding judge before whom the Reverend Pierre Brochard, a Dominican friar and doctor in theology, was tried for “robbery, with effraction,” and acquitted. The circumstances of the case were no less curious than the decision arrived at by the jury to whose sagacity it was submitted. One of its strangest features was the fact that Dr. Brochard, when interrogated by the Public Prosecutor with respect to the accusations set forth against him in the indictment, frankly admitted their substantial correctness, and favoured the Court with a highly graphic narrative of the performances for which he had been arrested,

imprisoned, and finally arraigned before a jury of his countrymen. According to the "acte d'accusation," Brother Pierre Brochard, D.D., having become an inmate of the Dominican Monastery at Lille, procured a set of false keys, and therewith opened the iron safe in which the brotherhood kept its ready cash, stock exchange securities, and other valuables belonging to the category of property pertinently described by Mr. Wemmick as "portable." Having possessed himself of Austrian Rente Debentures worth thirty thousand francs, and of some nine thousand francs in currency, he left the monastery at night-time, assumed the name of Berthier, travelled to Bordeaux, and there applied to one Molina, a local money-changer, for the conversion into currency of the Austrian stock which he had abstracted from the monasterial strong box. Meanwhile, however, the bereaved monks of Lille had notified all the Bordeaux money-changers not to liquidate the stolen bonds, the numbers of which they communicated by telegraph. Consequently, Molina carefully examined the debentures offered to him by Brother Brochard, and—finding their numbers identical with those inscribed upon the list transmitted to him by the Lille Dominicans—promptly gave the reverend Doctor into custody.

The story told by Brochard himself, so far as wealth of detail and vividness of description were concerned, completely threw that of the "acte d'accusation" into the shade. The learned monk avowed that he had commissioned a locksmith at Lille to manufacture a set of false keys upon the model of the real ones,

with which he contrived to furnish that artisan. Having obtained the copies and returned the originals to the place in which they were usually kept, he quitted the monastery one day, taking temporary leave of his fellow-monks; but re-entered it the same night, when they were all in bed and asleep, by the simple process of unlocking one door after another, including that of the safe, from which he abstracted money and securities to the value of a million of francs—not thirty-nine thousand, as modestly alleged in the indictment—and departed in peace. He had previously impressed upon the minds of his brethren that he was weary of life and somewhat suicidally disposed; so he deposited his monastic suit upon one bank of a neighbouring river, across which he swam, assuming secular garb on the other bank. In due time his Dominican frock and underclothing were found where he had left them; and the brotherhood jumped to the conclusion that he had drowned himself. Nevertheless, they took the wise precaution of communicating the numbers of their missing bonds to far-distant money-changers; and it was well that they did so, for Brother Pierre, while on his way from Lille to Bordeaux, talked freely with every one he met about “the suicide of the monk Brochard,” so that he was never suspected of the robbery, and would probably not have been detected at all had not M. Molina noticed the numbers of the Austrian debentures proffered to him for sale by “M. Berthier.”

The defence set up by Dr. Brochard’s counsel was startlingly novel, but it carried conviction of his client’s

innocence to the hearts of the jury, and thus secured the enterprising Dominican's acquittal. A brother of the Order, placed in the witness-box by the prisoner's advocate, informed the Court that, according to the strict interpretation of French civil law, Brochard had by no means committed a robbery, all valuables belonging to a monastic establishment being the common property of its inmates, members of that particular fraternity. The testifying friar admitted that Brochard had perhaps taken more than his just share, and somewhat prematurely into the bargain, of a fund of which, however, he was a co-proprietor in virtue of the decree regulating the expulsion of religious Orders, which enjoined that such funds should be equally divided among the brethren, who, it further enacted, were to be regarded as "members of a religious family." This being so, the money in question was legally as much Brochard's property as it was that of any other monk in the building, or of the entire community ; and, as a man could not steal what belonged to him, it followed that Brother Pierre was as guiltless of theft as the babe unborn. This daring syllogism proved irresistible to the jury, despite the withering condemnation pronounced upon it by the President of the Bordeaux tribunal ; and Dr. Brochard was restored to liberty, having conclusively proved by his proceedings in connection with the hoard of the Lille Dominicans that "community of property" is something more than a mere theory in at least one European realm. Of "division of property" there could be no question in his case ; for he took the whole amount that belonged

to his brethren as well as to himself, and left them nothing. In short, he acted in strict conformity with the principle of conduct laid down in the rough-and-ready old saying : " What's yours is mine, and what's mine is my own ;" and a French jury, regarding his action as the outcome of a wise and equitable Republican edict, solemnly and unanimously vouched for its legal correctness. One effect of this instructive verdict should be to induce French religious communities to confide their bullion and securities to the custody of respectable notaries or bankers, instead of keeping them in safes which can be " got at " by doctors of divinity who entertain the Brochard view of " portable property."

## SNOW.

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KING WINTER's mighty vassal, snow, is the persistent and irreconcilable enemy of municipalities and parochial boards in Northern climes. Year after year he declares war against these highly respectable authorities, and, although foredoomed to ultimate defeat, frequently obtains partial victories over their forces and puts them to temporary rout and confusion. While filling up old wrinkles in the seamed face of Nature, he imprints new ones upon the intelligent countenances of common councillors and district officials. Where local government is divided against itself, snow is master of the situation, and lords it with such rigour over his vanquished opponents that they are driven to combine against their merciless tyrant; but even then he succumbs more frequently to natural forces than to coalitions between town councils and boards of works. Centralisation alone is able confidently to defy him, to contest every inch of ground with him, to beat him back as regularly as he advances, in fact, to oppose to his unremitting invasion as unremitting a resistance.

Free institutions such as Englishmen love are scarcely compatible with success in the combating of

snow. Intuitive administration generally collapses under a determined onslaught of his fleecy hosts. He is a despot; and a despotic organisation is required to deal with him effectively. That organisation must, moreover, be eminently intelligent in its conception and accurate in its fulfilment. It must be instinct with volition and unlimited in resource. Mere unreasoning despotism is as powerless against the unrelaxed pressure brought to bear upon it by a long and heavy snowfall as it is against the march of intellect or the spirit of the age. The most complete and absolute despotism obtaining in Europe is that practised by the Russian Government, which also enjoys exceptional experience in the treatment of snow; yet in no Continental capital are the arrangements for withstanding the aggressions of this periodical invader, and for finally driving him away when the approach of spring undermines his vigour and dissolves his tenacity, more feeble and ineffectual than in St. Petersburg.

A rapid thaw in the great city on the Neva exhibits the most dismal picture imaginable of administrative impotence. No general and comprehensive plan is adopted for the removal of the fast-melting snow, which covers the whole surface of the streets with a superstratum of slush many inches in thickness, arresting wheeled and sledge traffic, and rendering pedestrian locomotion all but impossible. No simultaneous endeavour is made, either centrifugal or centripetal, to rid the city of this abominable infliction, although an amount of physical force is permanently at the disposal

of the authorities which, properly applied, would suffice to lift the snow and cart it away to the Neva in the course of a single night. With a garrison of fifty thousand men and at least one hundred thousand available moujiks ready to hand, the municipality and Police President of St. Petersburg content themselves with cleansing a few of the principal thoroughfares—preferentially those along which the Czar and the Grand Dukes may be expected to pass—and leave the rest of the Russian capital weltering in inconceivable slop until warmth of temperature steps in to their aid, and does their work for them, slowly but surely.

The visitations of snow to which London is exposed are fortunately of briefer duration and smaller volume than those which annually afflict St. Petersburg; but Londoners cannot flatter themselves that their municipal and local authorities display in encountering and overcoming them much greater energy or fertility of resource than is manifested by Russian officials. Indeed, cockneys have reason to be thankful for the comparative mildness of their climate when they contemplate London streets, particularly in the suburban districts, during the week or so immediately succeeding a tolerably severe snowstorm. What, one shrinks with terror from conjecturing, would become of us were our metropolis to be subjected to one of those snowfalls, common enough even in the North of Germany, that last from forty to fifty hours without abatement, cover whole provinces with a dazzling shroud from three to six feet thick, and break down the tall forest trees as though they were mere straw-stalks? A week of such

snow as is familiar to the citizens of Königsberg, Danzig, or even Berlin, would leave a mark upon the mortality rate of this capital which would never be forgotten.

The fundamental notion which appears to underlie the treatment of snow, as practised by the British municipal and parochial executive, is to let it alone as much as possible. In some parts of London, especially the northern and southern suburbs, this notion is carried out with true English thoroughness. Where the snow falls, there it is allowed to lie and freeze or thaw, as Providence may direct. It may be presumed that it is somebody's business to meddle with this encumbrance; but nobody does so, to the infinite inconvenience and misery of the families inhabiting the neighbourhood. In more central districts, advanced intelligence and bold enterprise have suggested the vigorous proceeding of shovelling and sweeping the snow off the sidewalks and from the centre of the roadway to places of security near either kerbstone, where it remains in frozen hillocks which prevent vehicles from drawing up to the pavement so long as the frost lasts, and which melt into horrible sloughs and dismal ponds as soon as the weather changes. When this recumbent matter, which, in its relatively solid condition, was easy to handle, and might have been removed by a moderate expenditure of labour, becomes so watery that it is exceedingly difficult to lift and carry away, gangs of men are employed to spoon it into carts with implements devised for scavenging substances of far closer consistency than melted snow.

From first to last, metropolitan methods of dealing with snow are characterised by lack of ingenuity and by

a secret consciousness of impotence. Uniformity of plan and energy in treatment are alike wanting. One parish lets its snow lie; another piles it up in the road; a third sweeps it into heaps at street-corners, that choke up the gutter-traps, and, when melted, inundate the *trottoir*. All alike appear to regard snow as an unaccountable phenomenon, fertile in painful surprises, and, on the whole, better ignored than interfered with. In due time, the powers that produced it will remove it. Meanwhile, doctors', tailors', and boot-makers' bills assume hideous proportions, and millions of human beings suffer unnecessary torments.

Other great capitals are wiser than London in their manipulation of winter's frigid gifts, and have long since found out that the only way to manage and dominate snow is never to let it alone from the first moment it begins to fall, but to persist in moving it as soon as it has effected a lodgment upon the ground. Berlin, where even municipal institutions are pervaded and animated by an intelligent despotism, probably affords the most brilliant illustration of what may be achieved by practical views and unity of purpose when unchecked by false economy. The German capital is liable to snowstorms of great severity and duration, but it tolerates no accumulation of snow upon the surface of its streets. Each successive day's snowfall is punctually lifted and carted away during the night, or rather, the early morning, for the work of removal commences at one a.m. and is continued until four by legions of strapping scavengers, impartially distributed throughout all the police districts of the city.

These men, if the fall be a heavy one, may be numbered by thousands upon thousands ; they are under the supervision of strict officials, and do their work with admirable effectiveness. After such a fall of snow as once a year or so plunges the English metropolis into perplexity, dismay, and discomfort, Berlin streets would, on the following morning, have been as clean as though scarcely a flake had descended upon them. Steam scavengers are there employed to fight the snow where it has drifted. In great emergencies the garrison is called upon to lend its aid to the town. The principle of action to which the authorities steadfastly stick is at once so simple and so sensible, that it is hard to understand why every civic administration should not adopt it frankly and unreservedly. Snow must not be suffered to accumulate, lest it become unmanageable ; therefore, the labour expended upon removing it while it is still falling is not wasted, but the contrary ; for every ton of snow thus carried away diminishes the gross amount of public inconvenience consequent upon a prolonged snowfall. The example of Berlin is already closely followed in Vienna and Munich, and it might be imitated by London with inestimable advantage to the population of our vast metropolis.

There are so many positive advantages connected with health, comfort, and recreation, to be derived from living in a country which, like our own, is blessed with a temperate climate, that it ill becomes Englishmen, under even such exceptional provocation as that offered by the distressing phenomena of a heavy snowstorm, to pass such a sweeping condemnation

upon the meteorological conditions of their native land as is but too commonly summed up in the indignant grumble, "Our confounded climate is certainly the worst in the world!" Nothing could be more unjust than such a sentence. When some unusual development of heat or cold causes brief but painful inconvenience to the large majority of these islands' inhabitants, it would be far more reasonable on their part were they to attribute such inconvenience to their own carelessness and lack of forethought than to any special climatic atrocity, peculiar to the country they live in. A little serious reflection could scarcely fail to convince them that their very neglect of precautionary measures against the troubles superinduced by sudden variations of temperature has no other valid excuse but the extreme rareness of those changes; and that, in fact, it is the general equability of the British climate which predisposes us all, more or less, to take so optimistical a view of our national weather that we are utterly unprepared to defend ourselves against the results of its rare caprice, whenever it pleases to play us a trick of more than common malignity.

In our domestic architecture, for instance, is attained the apogee of impotence to protect us from any evil consequent upon an abnormal condition of the temperature. Our houses, as a rule, are built in such sort that they triumphantly achieve what may with justice be termed the "unhappy medium"—that is to say, they are equally incapable of keeping out the heat and the cold. Their walls are thin, their windows are single, their rooms are draughty. Uniformity of temperature

throughout an English town-house—with exceptions so few as to be scarcely worth mention—is a blessing unknown to its tenants, no matter how abundant their worldly means may be. We English are accustomed to credit ourselves with the superiority of our domestic arrangements, as far as mere physical comfort is concerned, over those of Continental peoples; and we have proclaimed our advantages in this regard so loudly and persistently during the present century that they have obtained general credence throughout Europe, so that when a Frenchman, German, Russian, or Italian has bestowed exceptional pains upon rendering his dwelling habitable, he is wont to plume himself upon having approached the realisation of his ideal—“English comfort.” How delusive are our claims to attainment of the maximum of comfort, few foreigners, and, in all probability, still fewer Englishmen are aware. It is only when we are sternly brought face to face with our manifold shortcomings in the matter of domestic architecture, that we can be persuaded to listen for a moment to the unpatriotic suggestion that perhaps in some trifling and comparatively unimportant respects, “they order these things better abroad.”

It may be that, considered as dwellings especially calculated to protect their inhabitants against extremes of heat or cold, French town-houses are but little, if at all, superior to our own. An abnormally severe winter spasm distresses Paris well-nigh as acutely as London, and finds the French capital scarcely more capable of shaking off its inflictions than the British metropolis. The average Italian or Spanish house successfully defies

the fierce summer heats of Southern Europe; the dwelling of the well-to-do Russian is constructed chiefly with a view to exclude the terrific cold of such winter weather as ninety-nine Englishmen of every hundred have never even dreamt of. Neither of these typical residences can, however, be pronounced fit to meet the exigencies resulting from extremes of both heat and cold. But throughout Germany prevails a system of domestic architecture which admirably fulfils the two conditions most conducive to the achievement of home comfort all the year round, namely, interior coolness during the height of summer, and warmth during the depth of winter. It also secures an almost absolute immunity from draughts throughout all seasons of the year. The principal features of the system in question, by which these inestimable desiderata are obtained, are the following: Thick walls, double windows, the arrangement of family dwellings in flats—far more easily warmed and kept at a uniform degree of heat than storeyed domiciles; closed stoves, creating no draught between themselves and windows or doors, and giving out warmth simultaneously from every part of their outer surface—a quality the more important, inasmuch as they are generally lofty structures of monumental aspect, the top of which reaches to within three feet of the ceiling of the average German sitting or bed room. The comfort derived from these stoves is inexpressible. They are, unquestionably, open to serious objections from a sanitary point of view, generally accepted in this country; but the disadvantages attributed to them are more than over-

balanced by their perfect efficiency in generating an even, comfortable temperature throughout single rooms, however large, or suites of apartments, and in obviating that most insidious and maleficent enemy of mankind, a “thorough draught.”

Admitting, however, that there is as much to be said against closed stoves as in their favour, one is at a loss to conceive what valid argument can be adduced to the disadvantage of double windows, with which every dwelling room in the vast majority of German houses is supplied. No matter how oppressive the outside temperature may be, when the Dog Star is at his brightest, these admirable appliances, if kept closed, preserve an agreeable coolness in the rooms fitted with them. Similarly, when the furtive mercury lurks within the thermometer’s ball, the double window, its inner space of sill haply fortified against subtle inroads of icy wind or powdery snow by a stout sand-bag, proves a trusty shield wherewith the interior of an apartment may be protected from the inclemencies of the severest winter. The double window, in fact, is an infallible specific against the ills generated by excessive heat or cold, and a primary element in that ingenious combination of contrivances, the concrete result of which should be absolute indoor comfort. Thick walls, of course, involve considerable increase of expenditure to house-builders, upon whom pure philanthropic considerations cannot be reasonably expected to be more binding than upon any other industrial class of the community; and the antipathy entertained by English folk to living in flats, though by no means so general and strong as it

was even a dozen years ago, is still—so to speak—a national family instinct. But the physical difficulties, including that of pecuniary cost, impeding the adoption of double windows, at least by the upper and middle classes, are by no means considerable, and, once surmounted, would speedily be compensated a hundred-fold by the increment of comfort accruing from this invaluable accessory to domestic well-being.

Snowfalls, even of a far less overwhelming character than that by which London is now and then paralysed for two days and nights at a stretch, are terrible troubles everywhere; but in no other capital of Northern Europe—with, perhaps, the solitary exception of Paris—are they so inefficiently dealt with as in London. Leaving Russian cities out of the question, in which snow is no impediment to locomotion, but rather the contrary, and passing over Southern capitals, in which it is a transitory phenomenon, disappearing before their inhabitants have had time wherein to accustom themselves to its unfamiliar aspect, metropolitan ædiles would do well to take into consideration the treatment commonly accorded to immoderate snow in provincial German towns. When a heavy snowfall occurs, its first effect is a swift and general transformation of the vehicular rolling stock from wheeled conveyances to sledges. This measure is rendered necessary by the impossibility of clearing the roadways of snow with sufficient rapidity to obviate a total interruption of rotary traffic, fraught with hideous inconvenience to the population. The snow, therefore, between the kerb-stones is generally suffered to lie and harden, if genuine

cold weather have set in; and it soon becomes the smoothest and most agreeable of surfaces whereupon to carry on the business and pleasure transport service of a large town. If, on the other hand, the snowfall be succeeded by symptoms of thaw, the whole energies of the executive are concentrated upon removing it with all possible speed and promptitude. But with respect to the *trottoirs*, or sidewalks, the snow is not suffered to accumulate for more than two hours at a stretch. It is treated as a public enemy, to be done away with remorselessly, exhaustively, and without delay, "wherever found"—that is to say, on the Bürgersteig or section of the street reserved for pedestrians. In order, therefore, not to give it a chance of overpowering such resistance as can be offered to its invading operations by the individual citizen—whose offensive obligations towards the snow are far more stringent and strictly enforced than those incumbent upon the London householder—the German municipality proceeds to effect its removal even whilst it is falling. Legions of carts, each with its due complement of sweepers and shovellers, are sent forth into the highways and byways, and literally take the snow as it comes. Should the fall be extraordinarily copious and protracted, additional forces are unhesitatingly placed at the disposal of the town officials by the military authorities; and in Berlin, where the permanent garrison consists of nearly twenty thousand strapping young soldiers, it is no uncommon sight to see a hundred tall guardsmen in one street, shovelling up snow from the sidewalks with a well-directed and systematic energy that soon tells

upon the fleecy masses encumbering the pavement. No time is lost; the greatest available amount of muscular force and trained labour is brought to bear upon an intolerable nuisance, at no extravagant expense, and with results that would surprise the inhabitants of the largest and wealthiest city in Europe, could they but witness the peripetia of one supreme encounter between a first-class snowfall and the scavengers, municipal, military, and private (house-porters, shopmen, domestic servants, etc.), arrayed in arms against it by the Conscript Fathers of the German capital. Such a spectacle is at once a triumph of modern civilisation, and a gratifying illustration of the completeness with which common sense, timely expenditure, unity of plan, and concert in action may vanquish difficulties which, to less intelligent and enterprising organisations than those possessed by German rate-payers, obviously appear insuperable.

## SUICIDE IN PRUSSIA.

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ONE of the stock sights of Paris, exercising a strange and gloomy fascination upon the foreign visitors to that brilliant city, is the Morgue, that dismal gathering-place of the self-slain dead, as well as of those who have perished by secret violence or mysterious accident, which has been so frequently and graphically described by popular English authors. To the river-side Hostelry of Death are daily and nightly conveyed corpses that have been caught in the nets of the Seine, fished up by boatmen between bridges, cut down from tree-branches in the Bois and other Parisian parks, or simply found by the police or the public, lying stiff and stark in some nook or corner of the huge French capital. In the Morgue, after having been carefully cleansed from head to foot and decently laid out on stone slabs, they are exhibited for a certain number of hours, prescribed by law, to public view, with the object of achieving their identification; and casual spectators of this ghastly show, attracted thither by mere curiosity, are too often witnesses of distressing scenes, when relatives of missing loved ones, pressing forward to the glass partition that divides the dead

from the living, catch their first glimpse of a dread sight that realises their most agonising apprehensions. The Morgue is an old-established Parisian institution. In gathering together her casual dead in one central dépôt, accessible to the general public during certain fixed hours of the day, and to special applicants, under exceptional circumstances, at other times, Paris has set an example to other European capitals.

This example Berlin was the first to follow. Unlike its Lutetian prototype, the Berlin Morgue has been established in a beautiful garden belonging to the Veterinary College of that city, where, surrounded by green trees and flowering shrubs, stands a small building devoted to anatomical purposes. Underneath the principal dissecting-room, in the cellarage of the "Anatomie," are several small vaults, and above the door of one of these is painted the inscription "No. 7, Morgue." Within its narrow precincts, some twenty-five feet square, are ranged side by side five sloping counters, coloured a reddish brown, upon which, as they arrive in the black dead-cart, are laid out the bodies of those who daily die by their own hands, or are killed by accident in the streets and dwellings of the German capital. The corpses are partially enwrapped in snow-white linen cerements, and between their rigid toes are inserted printed forms, having reference to the age, sex, physical marks or peculiarities, causes of death, etc., of the bodies thus exhibited, and filled up, to the best of their ability and information, by the officials in charge of the Morgue. In one corner of the cellar stands a wardrobe containing the clothing

worn by the still occupants of the sloping counters at the time of their transfer to "No. 7." But seldom is this subterranean repository of the dead void of tenants awaiting identification. Indeed, it is found scarcely adequate to the accommodation of those whose claims to a brief sojourn within its whitewashed walls, though silent, are indisputable.

Suicide contributes to the Morgue of Berlin a large proportion of its lifeless inmates. Over three hundred men, women, and children annually do violence to themselves, with fatal results, in the capital of Imperial Germany. Throughout the Prussian realm, indeed, the practice of self-murder has increased so rapidly since the Franco-German War, that, whereas in 1870 only thirteen subjects of the Hohenzollern in every hundred thousand came to their death by suicide, the statistical returns of 1880 exhibited a ratio of seventeen per hundred thousand. The population of Prussia was then roughly estimated at twenty-six millions, of whom four thousand three hundred and thirty died by their own hands within a twelvemonth—three thousand five hundred and fifty-nine males, and seven hundred and seventy-one females. So large an increment as thirty per cent., within a decade, in the proportion of suicides to natural deaths, should surely have furnished food for grave reflection to the Prussian Government, as indicative that, in one way or the other, the *régime* obtaining in the Hohenzollern dominions was scarcely as successful as could be desired in promoting the material well-being and moral contentment of the Prussian people. It is, unfortunately, beyond a doubt

that the compulsory service system presses so insufferably upon the nation's manhood, that many men, in the full vigour of youth and health, prefer a sudden and violent death to the fulfilment of its irksome and frequently ruinous obligations. No fewer than two hundred and twenty-five Prussian soldiers and sailors perished by their own hands in 1879 ; but this item in the suicidal returns of that year could by no means be held to represent anything like the total of male adults prompted to self-slaughter by their repugnance to obligatory military service ; for in another column of the official tables, discreetly reticent with respect to matters calculated to further diminish the popularity of the army, seven hundred and three suicides of Prussian men were recorded as "having been committed by reason of unknown motives," whilst other one hundred and sixty-six were attributed to "weariness of life"—a motive which, within the same period of time, only stimulated six females to take their lives. These figures appeared to point unmistakably to the lamentable influence exercised upon the spirits of the Prussian male population by the crushing weight of the military incubus, which may, without exaggeration, be held accountable for nearly one-fourth of the total "dead reckoning" annually contributed by suicide to the mortality returns published by the Royal Statistical Department. Another fourth is ascribed to insanity, the particular form of madness resulting from habitual intemperance being credited, in 1873, with ninety-eight self-inflicted deaths, of which only four—to the honour of German women be it stated—were effected by females. Considering the severity

of the climate in Prussia throughout the long and dreary winter months, and the cheapness of alcoholic liquors throughout Northern Germany, this fact reflects extraordinary credit on the lower orders of the Prussian fair sex, as abstemious as they are hard-working, thrifty, and patiently enduring of privation.

Some curious information respecting the phenomena of suicide is to be gathered from the tabular statistics above alluded to. For instance, family troubles drove two hundred and nineteen Prussian men and women to the most desperate of human resolves, the adoption of which, however, was only due in one solitary case to the gamester's passion. Jealousy and ill-fortune in love led to the death of one hundred and eight youths and seventy-three maidens, who killed themselves because cruel Fate denied them the affections of those they loved. Sorrow for the dead induced seventeen widowers and but three widows to lay violent hands upon themselves. Twenty-seven men and nine women, unable to endure "the wound that honour feels," preferred annihilation to life with blemished reputation. Debauchery "stood accountant" for the death of four hundred and forty-six men, but only of twenty-four women. To the debit of "repentance, shame, and stings of conscience," were set down three hundred and twenty-eight suicides of both sexes, the proportion of male to female being about four to one. Incurable diseases were finally and peremptorily cured in two hundred and eighty-eight cases by lethal remedies, the cord predominating conspicuously over all other death-dealing nostrums. Indeed, nearly two-thirds of all the Prussian suicidists

hanged themselves, whilst one-fifth perished by drowning, and one-tenth by gun and pistol; of these last only eight females summoned up courage enough to shoot themselves, the favourite feminine methods of committing suicide being hanging and drowning. Seventy-six of both sexes cut their throats, twenty-one opened their veins and bled to death, forty-one leapt from great heights, twelve died of self-inflicted knife-stabs, and seven actually strangled themselves with their own hands—a method of suicide that implies extraordinary determination on the part of its perpetrator. Only nine of eight hundred and forty-six who died by drowning, cast themselves into the sea; the rest sought and found their deaths in lakes, rivers, and ponds. Turning to the tables recording the respective ages of all these unfortunates, it was noteworthy that four children under ten years of age—two boys and two girls—put an end to their young lives.

## BEGONE, DULL FAT!

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ACCORDING to the burden of a once popular English song, "It is good to be merry and wise, It is good to be honest and true; It is good to be off with the old love Before you are on with the new." Hitherto the achievement of these desiderata has been generally understood to be a privilege accorded by Dame Nature to her special favourites, except as far as concerns the prudence recommended in the last two lines, which may be an inherited characteristic, or a quality acquired by the aid of experience. Most people were under the impression, until quite lately, that, if a man were cheerful and sagacious, it was because he was "born so." A medical authority, however, who ought to know why things physiological—such as featherless bipeds, for instance—are "thus or thus," assures the public that in order to be merry and wise it must take plenty of exercise, and inhale vast quantities of fresh air. Laziness and indoor living, it seems, are the parents of intellectual dulness as well as of physical rotundity.

The natural inference to be drawn from this postulate is that stout people must be stupid, not to say gloomy; and, advancing a step further in the process

of reasoning by analogy, that, to be intelligent and hilarious, a man must be thin to boot. Julius Cæsar—the one “that Shakespeare drew”—was partly of this opinion; for, while objecting to Cassius on the ground that that “noble Roman” was too clever by half, he called attention to his “lean and hungry look,” adding, “He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.” Cassius, however, though undoubtedly a very clever man, was by no means a cheerful companion; sarcastic, perhaps, like Brown of Calaveras, but not merry. It cannot be that leanness of body is essential to jocularity of mind. If this were so, the pleasant old proverb, “Laugh and grow fat,” would be no better than a delusion and a snare. Was not Sydney Smith at once the gayest and fattest of British humourists? Were William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Lever, Mark Lemon, thin men? Surely, they were merry, and wise, too, although all three surpassed the average proportion of human stoutness to human stature.

And yet it is now positively asserted that “intellectual dulness” is the result of a superabundance of adipose matter, itself caused by “deficient oxidation.” Failing oxidation, we are further informed, certain products inside us which are in course of conversion into waste become transmuted into fat, or increase of waist, instead. Whereas they ought to be got rid of as “cumberers of the ground,” they are shut up in different parts of the body, and “become permanent obstructives to physiological processes.” When the blood is ill-oxidised, we are all liable to become portlier than is good for us, especially those among us whose flowing hair has been

thinned by Time, and who may be classed under three several headings—all meaning pretty much the same thing—flatteringly, as “in the prime of life”; dispassionately, as “middle-aged”; and disparagingly, as “elderly.” As we wax more and more obese, so, according to the authority already quoted, do we get more and more stupid. This is a disagreeable prospect for people of sedentary habits, such as journalists, for instance. It therefore behoves stout “parties” to find out with the least possible delay how increase of corporeal dimensions, and its corresponding decrease of intellectual activity, may most effectually be averted.

This consummation is to be achieved by “active outdoor work,” which at once removes “waste” or “waist,” spell the word which way you will, and “oxidises the blood.” The propounder of this theorem states that, for all kinds of work, middle age ought to be the best period with man, but that it is not generally so “because most of us are too fat and puffy”; and adds that walking, running, leaping, wrestling, bicycling, and other such exercises are the enemies and destroyers of fat. If these be carried out thoroughly in a pure atmosphere, very few middle-aged persons will need to complain of their stoutness. The assumption is that the average middle-aged, middle-class Englishman is stout, and therefore dull. Far be it from me to deny that he is the one and the other. If his mental opacity, however, be the direct outcome of his bodily rotundity, there can be no question that—as he is usually a family man—it is his duty to his wife and children to become thin and

entertaining. Paterfamilias has no right to bore his *placens uxor* and amiable offspring, evening after evening, because he prefers his roomy arm-chair to the exiguous saddle of a velocipede, or likes better to dally with his knife and fork than with a pair of fourteen-pound dumb-bells. He should certainly diminish his weight by getting rid of those parts of him which have "reached the stage of waste," and should impart a diverting vivacity to the action of his brain by oxidising the blood that feeds it.

After every successive ten-mile "constitutional" or breathing bout with the gloves, he would be surprised to find how much his conversational powers had increased. It would be pleasant to him to feel that his wife and daughters were favourably impressed by the unwonted lucidity and point of his remarks, or that even his sons were under some sort of compulsion to admit that "the governor was not quite so insufferably tiresome as usual." Such an Englishman might start on a walking tour, say from Hyde Park Corner to the Land's End and back, a prosy platitudinarian, and return quite crisp and epigrammatic. Or, if he would only dig steadily in his garden, or even in somebody else's, for six or eight hours a day, it is probable that in the evening, unless, indeed, he fell asleep immediately after dinner through sheer fatigue, he would be enabled to convey both instruction and amusement to his children in a colloquial form—somewhat after the manner of Mrs. Marcet's "Dialogues on Land and Water," or of Mr. Barlow in "Sandford and Merton"—instead of exchanging commonplaces with them about

the past, present, and prospective state of the weather or the malefactions of the servants.

It is of comparatively little importance, except to themselves, of course, whether mature bachelors are portly and dull, or lean and sparkling. The stout, middle-aged, married man, however, should take to heart the salutary hints let fall from time to time by medical science, and should hasten to sharpen his wits at the expense of his adipose accumulations. The Indian club, the brisk ride before breakfast, the vaulting-pole, the bicycle, the horizontal bar and flying trapeze—even that humble and inexpensive but eminently serviceable animal, Shanks' mare—will aid him to melt his “too, too solid flesh,” thus lightening the carnal fetters that oppress and trammel his spiritual being. “What he chiefly needs” is by no means “a loaf of bread,” as was the Walrus’s case; because that sort of food is bad for his complaint. Besides, with the example of the Oysters before him, whose untoward fatness was the immediate cause of their being basely and treacherously done to death, our stout, middle-aged man would, of course, rigorously abstain from so starchy a comestible as the “staff of life.” He needs to reduce his outline, and to oxygenate himself through and through, from top to toe. To do this he must adopt the habits of a professional athlete, both as to exercise and diet, and must breathe fresh air with all his might and main. Unless he perspires and oxidises, alternately or simultaneously, for the greater part of his time daily, his bulk will expand and his intelligence will contract.

If Hamlet had not been "fat and scant of breath," he would probably never have given Laertes a chance of wounding him with the poisoned foil, and it is difficult to conjecture how, in that case, Shakespeare's most popular tragedy would have been concluded. Our typical middle-class Englishman, fat, fifty, and dull of apprehension, has got to exert himself in the interest of his soul as well as of his body. He must shake off dull sloth and early rise. The process is not an agreeable one, at his time of life ; but anything is preferable to mental deterioration. He must inhale, and in great abundance, the very best sort of air that is procurable for love or money. To get that class of air, if he be of the Metropolitan persuasion, he must sally forth from London either on foot or on the back of a four-legged or three-wheeled instrument of locomotion. As soon as this dire necessity shall have become generally known, the chief highways radiating countrywards from London's suburbs will, in all likelihood, be thronged on Bank Holidays, Sundays, and Saturday afternoons, by stout, middle-aged pedestrians, equestrians, and velocipedists, heroically striving to brighten their intellects by lessening their weight, and disinterestedly training themselves for the evening entertainment, in the way of anecdote, quotation, and repartee, of their respective family circles.

## B EADS.

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MISS BUCKLAND is the author of an interesting paper on beads, tracing the geographical distribution of these ornaments, which, strung together in necklaces and bracelets, have for many thousands of years past constituted a sort of international barbaric currency. The fair essayist points out that not only had beads been a means of commercial intercourse in olden, as well as modern, times between the races among whom they are found in present use, but that the history of necklaces may fairly be accounted an important chapter in the annals of mankind's trading operations, from unchronicled ages down to our own period. The antiquity of beads appears to have been coeval with that of the stone hatchet and flint arrow-head. Those worn by the European cave-dwellers, perhaps a hundred thousand years ago, were rudely fashioned of the teeth of men and animals, and, like the shells and fragments of bone intermixed with them, were pierc'd for suspension round the wearer's neck. So conservative are the decorative tastes of primitive man, that necklaces similar to those which adorned our burrowing ancestors are still worn by savages in almost all parts of the world.

Countless innovators, however, have improved upon them in the meantime. The Lacustrians, for instance, a people belonging to a far later phase of civilisation, or rather of barbarism, than the dwellers in caves, decked themselves profusely with necklaces made of beads joined together in sets of from three to five, carved in various materials, such as bone, serpentine, gold, silver, bronze, and tin. Multiple and single beads executed in these substances, and of prehistoric antiquity, have been found in Switzerland, Britain, Hissarlik, and Mycenæ; among them discs of glass, roughly bored for the accommodation of the thongs or filaments upon which they were probably strung. Amber beads, which formed so important a commercial currency and article of exchange during the business infancy of man, have been discovered in great numbers among relics of the Stone Age, as well as in tombs belonging to the Age of Bronze, in every country of Europe, in Egypt and in India, indicating with sufficient distinctness several trade routes whereby amber found its way from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, and thence to the far East.

Shell discs both as ornaments and mediums of purchase seem to have been contemporary with beads among the aborigines of North and South America, Oceania, Japan, China, and India, for they continually turn up intermingled with bone and metal beads in ancient graves discovered in either hemisphere. They are in use, cut with great care and labour from the larger purple, scarlet, and white sea-shells, at the present day, throughout those parts of America

inhabited by "red men" and the various groups of Pacific Islands. In the United States and Canada they are known as "wampum," and still to a certain extent constitute the native currency, being also utilised as money by the Solomon and other islanders. Ostrich egg-shell discs are worn as necklaces in Africa by Bushmen and certain tribes remote from the seaboard, and similar ornaments abound in the more ancient Egyptian and Etruscan tombs, proving prehistoric intercourse between Etruria and Egypt. Strange to say, now as a hundred cycles ago, the pendants attached to these shell-necklaces are almost always teeth of some sort, or morsels of polished shell cut in tooth-shape.

The venerable antiquity of glass, which many people erroneously believe to be a comparatively modern invention, is conclusively demonstrated by recent discoveries in the prehistoric burying-places of Canada, Peru, the Pelew Islands, Egypt, and Great Britain, of innumerable glass beads, the most remarkable of which—popularly known by the name of "adder-stones"—are still used in the rural districts of this and other European countries as a charm for the cure of cattle diseases. There is a highly prized variety of this ancient bead upon which the *sobriquet* of "chevron" has been bestowed, and which figures among the crown jewels of Ashantee, where it is accidentally dug up from time to time, and fetches enormous prices. Beads exactly identical with these "chevrons" in form and markings appear in sculptured presentment upon the necks of Assyrian monarchs, whose effigies are graven on the slabs excavated and brought to England from Egypt by

Layard. A melon-shaped bead, sometimes made of glass and sometimes of other material, is also widely distributed over the face of the globe, having been found, among other relics of forgotten races, in Mexican graves and Assyrian tombs, as well as in European mounds and barrows without number. The "melon" and "chevron" varieties were among the carved beads used as "barter" by the Phœnicians in trading with many African tribes, amongst which they still, under the name of "aggries," are valued "far above rubies." They have now and then been disinterred in Ireland, as well as other archaic glass beads resembling those of the oldest types encountered in Greece and Egypt, Mesopotamia and Abyssinia.

At Donaghadee, in County Down, thirty-seven years ago, were unearthed one hundred and fifty glass beads of various colours, enriched with spiral ornaments in yellow enamel, as well as a few pierced discs of amber, all of which had probably, at some vastly remote period of time, formed a necklace of paramount beauty and value in the estimation of its wearer's contemporaries. In the course of excavations carried out in Norfolk, in the year 1839, there came to light sixty-five large beads of dark blue glass, rock crystal, and vitrified paste, all cut in regular facets, and pronounced by competent judges to be of extreme antiquity. The "Northwold Barrow," from which they were extracted, was supposed to be an Anglo-Saxon place of sepulture, but the beads manifestly appertained to a much older period of history than that of the Heptarchy. In fact, as far as one is enabled to judge by the manufactured articles

hitherto discovered in conjunction with the relics of our most ancient forefathers, beads are as old as the primeval man himself, and we are justified in the belief that as soon as that mysterious being had succeeded in fabricating implements which would cut and bore any hard material he set to work forthwith to fashion a bead. If ever we discover our petrified tertiary ancestor, who has hitherto baffled our pious researches with mortifying evasiveness, in all probability his stony neck will be encircled by a row of fossil beads, carved out of mammoth bones or the vertebrae of some gigantic mesozoic lizard.

From the middle of the fourteenth century to the commencement of our own cycle the manufacture of glass beads was chiefly engrossed by the Venetians, and the glass-blowers of Murano still produce four-fifths of all the beads made in Europe, although of late years enormous quantities have been fabricated in Birmingham, where many thousands of dozens are annually sold for dolls' eyes. Considerably over a hundred thousand pounds' worth of the beads used in embroidery, in ornamenting ladies' dresses and mantles—"bugles" are only a variety of bead—and in constructing showy necklaces and bracelets, is imported into this country every year. In manufacturing these lustrous, fragile trifles, the melted glass is taken from the pot by two workmen, who slightly expand the material attached to the end of their blow-pipes by breathing into the latter, after which, having made an orifice in the molten stuff, they join their respective pieces together, and then walk apart in opposite directions, drawing the glass into hollow rods of great length and small diameter. These

rods, when cool, are broken up into twelve-inch lengths, which in their turn are annealed, placed upon a sharp cutting-edge, and chopped into sections of the length required. The rough beads thus obtained are subsequently mixed with fine sand and ashes, put into a metal cylinder over a fierce furnace, and shaken rapidly round and round as they begin to soften. This done, they are washed, after which operation they are ready to be "finished" and strung.

Metal, wooden, and "composition" beads are for the most part moulded by pressure; their costlier varieties, such as are used for rosaries and chaplets, are hand-wrought and carved. For nearly seven centuries past beads have been at once emblems and reminders of prayer. The rosary was instituted by St. Dominic, in honour of the Virgin, and originally consisted of fifteen decades, each of ten Ave Marias preceded by the Lord's Prayer, the beads signifying the latter invocation being considerably larger than those emblematising the former. Nowadays, however, the ordinary "rosary," which is used by pious Catholics, consists of only five decades, having "told" which, it is customary to recite the "Credo" and the Litany of the Virgin. Beads are also in popular use, as symbols of prayer, throughout countries in which the Mohammedan and Buddhist beliefs are prevalent. In China, moreover, they are worn round the neck and on the head as badges of bureaucratic and military rank. Even the mandarin's "button," which surmounts his cap of office, and proclaims his social status to the initiated in Celestial etiquette, is nothing more than a glorified bead of coloured glass, precious pebble, or pink coral.

## A MUSEUM OF RELIGIONS.

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IN Paris, the city which, rightly or wrongly, is generally reputed to be the most irreligious of European capitals, a splendid building has been erected for the special accommodation of a large number of interesting objects illustrating the different religions believed in by mankind. The edifice in question has been designed in what is familiarly known as the “Græco-Roman” style of architecture; the cost of its construction has been in part defrayed by the State Exchequer; and the curious collection it accommodates is that drawn together by a M. Guimet, of Lyons, who in 1887 generously volunteered to pay two-thirds of the outlay incurred for the erection and fitting-up of the new museum, and also took upon himself the entire expense of removing his collection from Lyons to Paris. The “Musée des Religions,” situated hard by the Trocadéro, contains counterfeit presentments, evolved from the fertile and ingenious human imagination, of the supernatural personages belonging to all the known heavenly hierarchies of ancient and modern times. In one of its wings are displayed the images of Japanese and Egyptian gods; in another, the wooden divinities of

Africa and Oceania scowl or grin, each after its approved manner, at successive crowds of unbelieving and irreverent idlers; the cast and sculptured deities of China and India, of Greece, Italy, and Gaul, are exhibited in galleries facing the Avenue d'Iéna. Libraries and studies for the use of learned professors and assiduous students of comparative mythology occupy another portion of the building now rapidly advancing towards completion.

Thus, for the entertainment of the pleasure-loving Parisians, and of all those Frenchmen and foreigners who continually flock to the capital of the Third Republic in search of pastime and instruction, are gathered together under one roof originals or copies of all the principal objects of human worship—all the types of gods or of divine attributes that have been venerated by men of every race, colour, speech, and degree of intellectual development throughout the past two thousand years. The Paris "Museum of Religions" is the common home of the stately and beautiful denizens of Olympus, the hybrid monsters that squat in the high places of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese temples, the grim deformities on whose blood-stained altars innumerable victims were ruthlessly done to death of yore in Mexico and South America, the hideous caricatures of humanity adored by the sable populations of Africa, by dusky Australasians, and by tawny Polynesians. Moreover, the leading incidents of Christian sacred history are copiously illustrated by pictures and statuary, ikons and reliquaries. The lives and deaths of saints and martyrs have furnished congenial

subjects to innumerable artists of renown, whose works of this particular class are represented in M. Guimet's collection, at the very least, by engravings. From an artistic as well as a mythological point of view, therefore, the exhibition can scarcely fail to be fraught with extraordinary interest; for it includes the primitive barbarian's rudimentary efforts to embody his vague ideas of divinity in a concrete form, and the noblest inspirations of the skilled sculptor and accomplished painter, rife with the results of high technical training, arduous study, and accurate observation.

That which we nineteenth-century folk know of human history leads us to believe that, from the remotest ages of which we possess any record down to the present day, mankind has not only always yearned to worship some being of supernal power, far above its comprehension, but has experienced an irresistible desire to fashion a corporate semblance of that abstract entity—the offspring, so to speak, of its own innate or instinctive craving for extra-natural protection and favour. The existence of such a being, superior to themselves, but directly interested in their actions and destinies, has manifestly recommended itself as an absolute necessity to the minds of men, ever since society of the rudest and most elementary kind was first constituted.

It would appear as if the more inventive and enterprising spirits of each savage community, having more or less exhaustively thought out their ideals of Deity, had felt the insufficiency of a mere abstraction, invisible and intangible, as an object of adoration and a recipient of prayer. They wanted, in short, to see their

god or goddess, as well as to believe in his or her ability to further their ends or grant their requests. Having imagined to themselves a superhuman Power, capable of influencing the elements and of shaping their own destinies, they doubtless implored it to reveal itself to them by direct corporeal manifestations; and, failing these, proceeded to give it a physical shape, striving to portray its Divine attributes of strength and sagacity, benevolence or ferocity, mansuetude or vengefulness, according to their various conceptions of the Supreme Being, by the exaggeration of facial lineaments, or by investing their "graven image" with the special characteristics of animals which they were accustomed to regard as paramountly vigorous, fleet, combative, and unrelenting, or meek and merciful.

The repulsive idols of the South Sea Islanders, with their clumsy bodies, huge gaping mouths, glaring eyes, and formidably truculent expression of countenance, and the quaint composite figures, in which all manner of bestial types are incongruously blended, those also that represent the multitudinous *dramatis personæ* of the Brahmanical mythology, have their origin alike in this sincere and persistent endeavour of simple-minded men to depict their gods fully equipped with all the supernatural forces ascribed to them by their original inventors. There is, as far as travellers know, no tribe of savages, however isolated from the rest of mankind by geographical accident or racial idiosyncrasy, that has not wrought out its idols in conformity with its own peculiar notions of what deities should and must be in order to keep touch with human beings, and yet

to differ from these latter so conspicuously that they cannot possibly be mistaken for mere effigies of mortality. Even "the poor Indian," who, as the poet assures us, "sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind," is a worshipper of symbols, obedient to his consciousness of a need for something palpable, if representative, to which he may pay homage at certain times or seasons, or which, worn in the form of an amulet, may guard him from danger and secure success to his most adventurous enterprises.

Physical strength, swiftness, and courage being the qualities which most immediately appealed to the sympathies of peoples in comparatively early stages of civilisation, accustomed to war upon one another almost without intermission, unwitting of the conventional respect for human life that accrued from the teachings of Christianity and Buddhism in later ages, it is not to be wondered at that the embodiments of Divinity were made to assume such shapes as that, for instance, of the winged Assyrian bull, a superlative type of might, fleetness, and valour. In the plastic deifications of Egyptian kings and heroes are to be seen eagle-headed giants, and many other attempts to personify the ruder virtues that awakened the admiration and secured the reverence of the imaginative race formerly dwelling on the banks of Father Nile.

The Paganism of ancient Greece was instinct with a subtler grace and finer poetic feeling than that of Egypt. It invested the very face of Nature with a mysterious charm and entrancing interest which had never theretofore been even dreamt of by the followers

of more barbarous cults, and which have been too harshly repudiated by Christianity as impious and degrading. When Greek polytheism was the religion fervently professed by the most artistic and accomplished populations of Southern and Eastern Europe, many of the nobler animals were held in high public esteem by reason of their association with one or another incarnation of some popular deity. The sea, sky, and after-world were ruled by gods of the first magnitude; in every river or stream lurked its own tutelary naiad or water god; every tree was the home of a dryad; the forests were peopled by fauns and satyrs, as well as by their furred and feathered folk; the Lares and the Penates were enshrined in every household, and exercised an appreciable influence upon every man's family affairs through the medium of the firm belief entertained in their omnipresence and omniscience within the four walls enclosing their province of action.

In the images of the greater gods, members of the splendid and romantic Olympian hierarchy, the greatest sculptors the world has ever known depicted the perfection of human beauty, force, dignity, and symmetrical proportion. The achievements of these grand old divinities, whose liability to the passions and disappointments of mankind rendered them so sympathetic, as well as adorable, to their worshippers, were sung in immortal verse by poets whose genius has never been surpassed by that of Latter Day bards. Zeus and Heré, Apollo and Pallas, Hermes and Venus figure in the "Museum of Religions" next door to the obese

idols of the Celestial Empire and to the grotesque impersonations of the Hindoo Trinity. In their immediate vicinity Mumbo-Jumbo displays his hideous physiognomy and shapeless carcase, whilst the goggle-eyed, fantastic demon-gods of the Pacific are nigh at hand, affording the wildest of contrasts to the calm loveliness and stately repose of many a masterpiece of Hellenic art. It would be difficult to organise an exhibition more replete with attraction to the theologian, the anthropologist, or the philosopher than that which the magnificent generosity of a French savant and the judicious liberality of the Republican Government have provided for Parisians and visitors to "La Ville Lumière."

## CONVENTIONALITIES OF DRESS.

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To the intelligent foreigner visiting this metropolis during the dog-days few of the every-day street sights that encounter his curious, observant eyes are so suggestive of amazement and pity as a ruddy, full-bodied Englishman of the upper middle class, striding over the burning pavement to his business or pleasure at a good round pace, buttoned up to his cravat-pin in a tight-fitting frock-coat, his flushed brow surmounted by a stiff, highly burnished, black chimney-pot hat, stout dogskin gloves encasing his swollen hands, and perspiration visibly bedewing his unspeakably respectable lineaments. Under that superfine double-milled Saxony broadcloth surtout is a waistcoat—not visible, but materially aggravating the heat and constraint from which its wearer is too obviously suffering. Cloth trousers, strong double-soled boots, a thick silken "cataract" and unyielding starched collar, complete the outward and visible costume of this martyr to British received notions of decorum and propriety. It may be that the thermometer has thought fit to violate the most hallowed traditions of national temperature. He scorns to follow the example set by so unstable a substance as

quicksilver—a mere time-server, whose rise and fall are slavishly subservient to the whims of Dan Phœbus.

The well-to-do Briton, no matter what his party politics may be, is a staunch Conservative with respect to all current conventionalities. The most oppressive of these, especially in high summertide, is that which ordains and controls the fashion and material of his out-of-doors dress ; but he sticks to it with a perseverance that would be heroic were it not ridiculous, because there is no mundane ill of which he stands so chronically in fear as social indictment for the heinous crime of oddity—for the breach of an unwritten law, hideously oppressive to all who uphold it, but adhered to with as rigid an exactitude as though a point of honour were involved in its faithful observance.

No infringement of this mysterious code is more bitterly resented by English society than what respectable people are pleased to designate as “eccentricity” in dress ; so the London merchant, broker, Government clerk, solicitor, or wealthy tradesman envelopes himself during the sultry summer months in garments ingeniously devised for the development and maintenance of abnormal bodily heat, consoling himself for infinite discomfort with the reflection that he is in every respect as are his fellow-citizens, and that no man can with justice accuse him of the least proclivity towards innovation in the direction of personal ease and convenience. Thus attired, without a ventilating flaw in his social harness, he labours painfully along a crowded, sunny thoroughfare, breathing heavily and mopping his moist forehead with a moister handkerchief, an

object of comical compassion to some coolly clad alien —say, a Frenchman arrayed in a loose silken wrapper, nankeen trousers, light shoes, and an all but imponderable straw hat—who, contemplating his unnecessary agony, smiles cynically, and murmurs “Consecrated blue! has he hot, that one there! One must be mad —mad to be tied—to dress oneself in a manner so insensate by a heat thus ferocious!”

It is, indeed, amazing to the verge of incomprehensibility that Englishmen should thus stubbornly persist in ignoring the variations of temperature to which their native country is so peculiarly liable. Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and all other Continental races conform with more or less submissiveness to the exigencies of climatic change. The Briton alone bids stern defiance to natural accidents of this class, probably deeming it beneath his inborn dignity as a Son of the Island Queen to subordinate his habits and customs to meteorological phenomena which he regards as unreasonably abnormal, and therefore unworthy of serious consideration. It does not appear to strike him that so startling an exception to the temperate rule of our climate as that afforded by a sub-tropical summer may prove the precursor to a series of torrid seasons, and that, in view of such a trying contingency, he would do well to turn his attention to some commonly sensible expedients for obviating the future recurrence of the distressing inconveniences that accrue to him in hot weather from his infatuated loyalty to the time-honoured frock-coat and tall silken hat.

These articles are not especially symbolical of the

moral virtues, nor are they invested with any surpassing historical interest. They are lacking alike in grace of form and beauty of colour—commonplace items of a sumptuary legacy bequeathed to us by a prosaic epoch, of an ugly heritage which we have not hitherto had the courage to disavow and renounce. They are intrinsically unbecoming and strangely out of keeping with the æsthetic aspirations that exercise so marked an influence upon cotemporary English society. A Chelsea-blue fanatic or a lily worshipper, clad in black broadcloth, and severely chimney-potted, on a broiling hot day, is an anachronism that “jumps to the eye,” as the figurative Gaul would say—a living contradiction between principle and practice—a self-stultifying monstrosity. Were the British æsthete consistent to his creed of picturesqueness and harmony, he would strive to suit his garb, in shape, hue, and texture, to the conditions imposed upon him by the elements—to the scorching suggestions of the sun and the hot hints of faint but sultry airs. Loose, turned-down collars, flapping sombreros, linen jackets, snow-white or of delicate fawn colour, soft cambric shirts—not starched to the consistence of a metal cuirass, but complacently pliant—wide trousers of some thin, light fabric, low-toned silken socks, and open shoes should be his only wear whilst taking his walks abroad in London streets and parks during the summer solstice. An æsthete of inflammatory aspect is only tolerable in the depth of winter. When the glass stands at ninety odd it is his duty to look cool, thereby practically illustrating the “fitness of things” for the benefit of his less-cultured

fellow-men. Ornate he may, and even should be, within the limitations of his art canons ; but before all else his outward seeming should "compose" harmoniously with the actual state of the weather.

Seriously speaking, it is time that the arbiters of fashion, those illustrious and potent personages whose exalted position and commanding influence entitle them to take the initiative in all sorts of minor social reforms, and who, fearless of snubs and "chaff," may safely dare to innovate, should introduce some seasonable modifications in the Englishman's every-day costume. Improvements of this particular description can only be effected from above, and by the force of example. Of the field of sumptuary reform it may with truth be averred that "Dukes may rush in where brokers fear to tread." We English, undoubtedly, are instinctively conservative in small and unimportant matters; but we are also eminently susceptible of conversion to customs and fashions recommended to us by leaders of society, and are never better satisfied with ourselves than when we are imitating our betters with more or less fidelity and good taste.

It needs but a little timely boldness upon the part of a Royal Prince or two, promptly communicating itself to the wealthy and blue-blooded elect who constitute their immediate *entourage*, to abolish the constrictive frock-coat and oppressive chimney-pot, at least during that stifling period commonly known as "the height of the London season." Few of those who have freely taken part in its multifarious gaieties will readily forget the torments they have undergone at garden parties, afternoon "teas," exhibitions of paintings,

and other daylight recreative gatherings, by reason of their bondage to glossy broadcloth and the sable "stove-pipe," as the British hat is scornfully styled by our American cousins. The eternal gratitude of patient mediocrity and long-suffering respectability, themselves forlorn of audacity and enterprise adequate to self-emancipation from the tyranny of those baleful garments, will be rightfully due to the Royal Reformer who shall initiate a customary epoch of white duck and soft felt, and teach the middle-class Englishman to adapt his clothes to his climate, from a picturesque as well as a common-sense point of view.

## DELIGHTFUL NONSENSE.

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ON January 29, 1888, Edward Lear, a genial humourist, to whom millions of Anglo-Saxon boys and girls and "children of a larger growth" are indebted for an inexhaustible source of happy, innocent laughter, died at San Remo in his pretty villa, upon which he had bestowed the name of the *doyen* of living English poets. The "comic faculty" with which the deceased gentleman had been so lavishly endowed by nature found expression in drawings of unrivalled absurdity, as well as in the no less quaintly ridiculous verses illustrated by those graphic drolleries. Like Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the gifted apostle of Topsyturvydom, Edward Lear wielded pen and pencil with equal facility and verve; the grotesque ideas with which his fancy teemed took form as readily in drawings of an irresistible ludicrousness as in lines that no one but a born dullard could read without being moved by them to outbursts of joyous merriment. Many years have elapsed since the immortal "Book of Nonsense," professedly written for the amusement of the youthful generation, took the English public by storm, ran through an extraordinary number of editions, and became a household word in

every laughter-loving family throughout the three kingdoms; but its charm is as potent at the present day as it was when Greater Britain first held its sides over the domestic colloquies of Mr. and Mrs. Spicky Sparrow and the surprising adventures of the Jumblies, "who went to sea in a sieve."

The "Book of Nonsense," though perhaps not strictly a "thing of beauty," is undeniably a "joy for ever." It exemplifies, no less forcibly than do the inimitable "Bab Ballads," or the delightfully ludicrous "Alice in Wonderland," the truth of Sydney Smith's axiom, that incongruity is the soul of humour. Our language contains no piece of versification more genuinely funny than the ballad of "The Duck and the Kangaroo," or than Mr. Floppy Fly's lamentations, addressed to his sympathetic friend, Mr. Daddy Longlegs, in respect to his physical disqualifications from attending the Court of his Sovereign. Nor were Edward Lear's Nursery Rhymes one whit less exquisitely humorous than his metrical narratives setting forth the impossible achievements of impossible persons and things. The "Old Man with a Beard" of such luxuriance that it afforded accommodation to "three larks and a wren, two cocks and a hen"—I quote from memory—who "all made their nests" in that redundant hirsute appendage, was one of many comical figures, the offspring of Lear's prolific imagination, suggesting hilarity that "custom cannot stale." So was another memorable Old Man—he of Tobago—whose change of diet from "rice, curry, and sago" to more substantial vivers when, relaxing former restrictions, "his doctor one day Unto

him did say, 'To a roast leg of mutton you may go,'" is languidly alluded to by Eugene Wrayburn in "Our Mutual Friend," whilst discussing the mysterious story of the "Man from Somewhere."

For oddity as well as genuine fun, Mr. Lear's conceptions of comic animals, preternatural insects, and preposterous vegetables have never been surpassed by the creations of any humorous draughtsman, ancient or modern. His two Nonsense Alphabets know no mirth-provoking equal in the English tongue, though run hard in the matter of sheer rollicking buffoonery by Wilhelm Busch's delightful illustrations to the German alphabet, occupying two sheets of the inestimable "Muenchener Bilderbogen," which abound in ingenious "word-plays," pictorially interpreted with excruciating comicality of detail. How many Englishmen, as well as Germans, I wonder, have laughed themselves sore over Busch's amazing exposition of his couplet on the letter "L"—"Die Lerche hoch im Ether steigt, Der Loewe bruellt, wenn er nicht schweigt"—in which we see a lark laboriously climbing skywards up an interminable ladder, and a portly two-headed lion, one of its faces distorted by a spasm of stupendous roaring, whilst the other is bland with the calm of contented silence?

To a great many happily constituted human beings nonsense, paradoxical as the assertion may seem, is the most enjoyable of all intellectual entertainments. It is rife with the pleasurable element of surprise, and gaily sets at defiance all the hard-and-fast rules and cut-and-dry precedents by which literary and artistic

taste is apt to be guided in its consideration and relish of graver productions. Of course, to be amusing to intelligent persons, nonsense must be supremely clever. It must be rich in ludicrous contrast, such as is afforded by the juxtaposition of incongruous objects, actions, or thoughts ; among its salient characteristics must be subtlety of idea and felicity of expression. Brilliant nonsense, such as that which has flowed so freely, within the past quarter of a century, from the pens of Edward Lear, William Schwenck Gilbert, Henry S. Leigh, Jeffrey Prowse, “Artemus Ward,” “Mark Twain,” and “Max Adeler,” belongs to the realm of humour, rather than to the domain of wit. Hence it is to be found in greater abundance and a higher stage of development amongst peoples of Anglo-Saxon origin than amongst the Latin and Slav races. Few Englishmen are witty, or even what our vivacious neighbours term “spirituel” ; but a large majority of them are either actively or receptively humorous. England and America can justly lay claim to a more copious productiveness, in respect to writers of thoroughly delectable nonsense, than France, Italy, and Spain combined. Of European Continental countries, indeed, Scandinavia alone has generated an absolute master of this slight but graceful branch of literary art, in the person of Hans Christian Andersen, whose “Resolute Leaden Soldier” and “Shadow” are as spontaneously and deliciously nonsensical as Captain Reece, “commanding of the Mantelpiece,” or even the genially terpsichorean “Bishop of Rum-ti-foo” himself. To French, Spanish, and Italian playwrights the stage

is indebted for funny plots and comic "situations" without number; but all the waggery of Continental prose and verse writers has never hitherto created anything so wildly ridiculous, because so utterly nonsensical, as Thackeray's and Harte's "Novels by Eminent Hands," or as the former author's "Tremendous Adventures of Major O'Geoghegan." In bygone days, when we still possessed Henry Byron, Tom Robertson, William Brough, Tom Hood the younger, Andrew Halliday, Jeff Prowse, Henry S. Leigh, and William Brunton—all now gathered to their rest—a series of "upside-down" biographies divided public favour with the *impayable* "Bab Ballads." Throughout those admirable papers, unknown to the present generation of laughter-lovers, the nonsense-sprite—Edward Lear's familiar—frolicked with lightsome tread and inexhaustible spirits, gibing at history and romance alike, and profuse of the "nods and becks and wreathed smiles" which unlock the gates of glad and refreshing merriment.

In days like these, when life is perhaps a thought too stern and strenuous, and the bread-earning struggle is far more eager and absorbing than it was of yore, one cannot be too grateful to writers of charming nonsense, like the amiable jester who shuffled off his mortal coil in the sunny South, far away from his native land. Theirs is the fanciful spell that transports the mind for a brief space from this workaday world, with all its petty troubles and ever-threatening cares, to visionary realms, no denizen of which is under the compulsion of duty or subject to the vexatious

constraints of conventionality. To men oppressed by the weight of political responsibilities or business anxieties it is true relaxation to be brought into contact, within theatrical precincts or even in print, with beings who may be counted upon not to say or do anything which might be reasonably expected from them in accordance with canons of conduct or with the unwritten law of social etiquette. The extravagant nonsense that such fictitious creatures talk and enact is none the less welcome to the overwrought brain, susceptible to the appeals of humour, because it frequently conceals within a glittering shell of frivolity or folly the germs of the truest and keenest kind of sense.

Through the peculiar variety of nonsense which has of late years been identified with the name of Mr. Gilbert runs a vein of pungent satire which tickles the public palate very shrewdly, and imparts a biting zest to the dialogue and verses of his operatic libretti, having little in common with the delicate flavour of Planché's extravaganzas or the robust absurdity of Byron's and Burnand's burlesques. It is the province of Gilbertian humour, like that of certain Oriental condiments, to sting as well as to stimulate—to give a little pain as well as a great deal of pleasure. Such was not the case with the unadulterated fun of the kindly humourist whose loss many Englishmen deplore. Edward Lear's jokes, side-splitting though they were, displayed an extraordinary harmlessness, lack of irony, and freedom from ill-natured allusions to the blemishes or weaknesses of "poor human nature." They were the outcome of a mirthful,

jovial disposition, an eccentric originality of thought, and a highly artistic temperament, singularly perceptive of the comic aspect of things in general. During his life they afforded boundless delight, of a sort that never palled upon eye and ear, to unnumbered hosts of his fellow-countrymen in every part of the habitable globe ; and doubtless they will long survive him to furnish joyous entertainment to many a generation yet unborn.

## SPONSORIAL DUTIES.

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IN an Encyclical Letter, addressed to the faithful of the Anglican Church, the right reverend prelates who took part in the last Lambeth Conference set forth the outcome of their grave and lengthy discussions. To this important document they appended a series of resolutions passed by the episcopal conclave during its meetings, as well as the reports submitted to it by committees appointed to consider special subjects. As a body the Bishops declined to be responsible for the statements contained in these reports, to which publicity was given solely and expressly on the ground that they were rife with "fruitful matter for consideration." Some of the resolutions treated of questions fraught with interest to the laity, such as temperance, divorce, and the dulness of Sunday—an English institution upon the propriety and even necessity of which their lordships dwelt with striking insistence, basing their arguments upon Divine authority. Other resolutions dealt with topics more particularly affecting ecclesiastics and Churchmen, as, for instance, the proposed amalgamation of Dissenters, and the changes sought to be effected in the Book of Common

Prayer. With the exception of some sophistical special pleading on behalf of a still more rigorous and oppressive observance of the Sabbath than that under which our working classes already groan, the resolutions were characterised by a moderation of tone that did credit to their pious compilers.

The Committee on Temperance refused to condemn the use of stimulants as an offence against morality or breach of good conduct, whilst advocating total abstinence, except from the wine administered in the celebration of the Communion service, as a "means to the end." Another Episcopal Committee deplored the circumstance that divorce should have been facilitated by legislation in recent years; but it did not recommend that divorcees, re-married by a registrar, should be prohibited from partaking of the sacrament. On the sore subject of marriage with a deceased wife's sister the members of the Conference did not touch at all. They acknowledged, however, the value of the work done by "labourers in the vineyard" who were not members of the Church of England, and expressed the hope that at some future time "organic unity" might prevail among Christians of every denominational variety. The right reverend fathers did not propose to take any active measures for recalling to the Established fold such stray sheep as Methodists, Wesleyans, Baptists, Independents, Plymouth Brethren, or any other of those conscientious sectarians whose dissidences with Mother Church suggested to a cynical French humourist the remark that "the English had seventy religions, but only one sauce." In this abstinence from interference with their

chapel - going fellow - Christians, the Bishops showed wisdom and discretion alike.

They were less reticent with respect to sponsorial incumbencies, to which they called the special attention of their flocks, pointing out the prevalent and deplorable omission on the part of godfathers and godmothers to fulfil the duties undertaken by them at the baptism of their respective godchildren, and exhorting them to take to heart the responsibilities which they had voluntarily assumed in that particular regard.

It is probably due to the "storm and stress" which appear to be unavoidable conditions of human life nowadays that godfathers and godmothers, as a rule, think but little of their sponsorial duties, or are apt to interpret them in a sense widely different from that which, in less eager and bustling times than these, was ascribed to them by all the leading actors in the baptismal ceremony. At present the majority of those persons, male and female alike, "who promise and vow three things" in the name of a more or less vocal infant, within the precincts of some sacred edifice, appear to entertain the opinion that they have fully discharged their obligations to the newly made Christian when they have bestowed upon it a "front-name," as well as a present proportionate in value to the amount of their private means, or to the extent of their regard for the neophyte's parents. The average British godfather's sense of duty towards his godchild finds concrete expression in the form of a coral-and-bells, an embossed mug, or a silver knife, fork, and spoon neatly fitted into a morocco case. In this respect the views of a god-

mother rarely differ from those of a godfather. When a sponsor of either sex happens to be enormously wealthy, and the baby to whom he or she "stands" has had the good luck to be born in the lap of luxury, the eating and drinking utensils above referred to are not infrequently made of pure gold, and the apparatus for facilitating dentition is sometimes enriched with gems of price.

Money attracts money, whether in the shape of hard cash, or of what Mr. Wemmick aptly defined as "portable property." An infant, predestined by the accident of birth to pass its childhood's years in the enjoyment of every imaginable comfort and superfluity, gets christening presents fashioned in the precious metals, the intrinsic value of which bears convincing testimony to the wealth and prodigality of their donors. Even in the humblest ranks of society, it is the custom that sponsors should acknowledge and, as it were, signalise the interest they are supposed to take in their godchildren by the presentation of some gift, no matter how useless the article given may prove to its nominal recipient, immediately or prospectively. With this act of generosity, for the most part, the duties of the sponsor are held to have been fulfilled, and his responsibilities, as far as their practical result is concerned, may be said to cease and determine.

A few godfathers and godmothers of exceptional conscientiousness and good-nature extend their sponsorial beneficence to their "name-children" in after life, when a timely tip fills the schoolboy's heart with brief but rapturous joy, and a birthday present, ornamental rather than useful, means bliss for the time being to "miss

in her teens." It is seldom, unfortunately, that sponsors trouble themselves about the morals or manners of their godchildren, even during the period of the latter's nonage, or venture to interfere with their parents' methods of bringing them up. Still more rarely do they pursue them through life with virtuous precepts and salutary exhortations. Cases have even been known in which godfathers did not deem it necessary to set an example of absolutely blameless conduct to their godsons, and in which it would have been highly undesirable that god-daughters should have copied the achievements of their godmothers.

All these actualities nevertheless and notwithstanding, the admonition addressed to latter-day sponsors by the prelates of the Established Church means—if it be not a mere *pro-forma* utterance—that it is the duty of godfathers and godmothers to look after their name-children a great deal more sharply than has been their wont for some time past; to watch over their behaviour, import the moral element into their education, and keep them up to the mark in respect to the regular performance of their religious observances. The responsibilities thus implied are so multifarious, and so onerous to boot, that ninety-nine out of every hundred average persons would probably shrink from them in consternation, were they convinced that acceptance of the sponsorial office would plunge them into such a boundless and tempestuous "sea of troubles." If one may so term it, the honorary appointment of godfather would presently be at a ruinous discount; or at the very least applicants for it would look for a liberal remunera-

tion of their services, instead of making up their minds to pay handsomely for the questionable privilege of holding somebody else's child over a font.

It is not unlikely, moreover, that a good many parents might strenuously object to active and continual meddling with their offspring on the part of persons whose kinship to the latter would be, after all, only of a spiritual nature—theoretical, let us say, rather than practical. The young people themselves, again, when past the scholastic stage of their career, might find the interference of sponsors in their little love affairs or favourite recreations somewhat irksome. Boys and girls, as a rule, have enough to put up with, in the way of advice and warnings, from uncles, aunts, and tiresome old family friends, without being subjected to godfatherly surveillance or godmotherly nagging.

Another painful aspect of the consequences that might accrue from a too literal interpretation of spon-sorial obligations presents itself to the speculative mind. It is notorious that beadle<sup>s</sup> and sextons not only give away brides without number at lowly or surreptitious weddings, but that they stand sponsors at the christenings of poor folks' babies in quite a wholesale manner. The clergy are much to blame for allowing them to do so, save in strangely exceptional emergencies ; but the fact remains that these secular servants of the Church, in common with the female pew-opener, another spon-sorial pluralist, are constantly permitted to make promises and vows which they have not the least intention or ability to keep. If godfathers were under moral compulsion to "take a hand" periodically in

the private affairs of their godchildren, the duties of beadle would suffer intolerable complication, and the pew-opener's office would not be worth having, whilst the lives of their respective godchildren would become a burden to them. What British father could possibly be gratified by the frequent presence of a sexton in the bosom of his family ; what hard-working mother would allow her children to be "worried" by the long-winded homilies of a snuffy old woman, teeming with texts and profuse of parish gossip ? Perhaps, on the whole, innovations of this kind are better dispensed with ; and the maintenance of domestic peace in family circles might not be greatly assisted by any radical alteration in the present inoffensive relations existing between godparents and godchildren.

## MUSIC AL-FRESCO.

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IT may be doubted whether existence would be tolerable for any considerable length of time, save to a stone-deaf man or woman, if it had to be carried on in close contiguity to an organ provided with twenty-seven trumpets, and continuously played. If to the normal and intrinsic terrors of so formidable an instrument be added a settled tendency on the part of its twenty-seven trumpets to perform one tune only, and to blare out that melody "fortissimo" over and over again for four hours at a stretch every evening of the workaday week except Saturday, when they keep it up with unrelenting clamour for an extra sixty minutes or so, death or emigration would alone prove adequate to heal the sorrows of a neighbourhood afflicted by the presence of this particular engine of torture. A less drastic remedy, however, than either of the above was successfully tried, at a comparatively recent date, by Mr. Samuel Winter, of Brentwood, who, having been much against his will subjected to the "peine forte et dure" of an organ twenty-seven trumpet strong, played at the instance of Mr. William Davies upon the premises of Mr. Benjamin Baker — presumably

adjacent to Mr. Winter's own tenement in the King's Road—applied for an injunction to restrain those gentlemen from further annoying him by performances upon the instrument in question.

It was not alone the organ to which Mr. Winter objected, although he mournfully pointed out, through counsel, that "it was remarkable not only for its noise but for the monotony of its music." In Mr. Baker's back yard—surely a strange locality in which to develop "all the fun of the fair"—had been solidly established sundry shows, steam circuses, swings, roundabouts, rifle galleries, and other "sports and entertainments," constituting a nuisance, from Mr. Winter's point of view, of a singularly large and strident character, which undermined his equanimity and shattered his domestic peace. Moreover, these "sports and entertainments" nightly drew together large crowds of people, whose sympathy with the blatant organ found vocal expression in glad shouts and jubilant cheering. With this concord of vehement sounds the publicans of the vicinity found no fault, for it stimulated thirst in the frequenters of Mr. Baker's back yard, and, consequently, led to a lively consumption of liquid refreshment.

Other persons, among them a "lady journalist," resident hard by, testified to the sufferings caused to them by performances "the principal feature of which was certainly not silence," whilst protesting that they were by no means fastidious or over-sensitive, and only desired to live tranquilly "like ordinary English people." Mr. Justice Kekewich, before whom the case was tried, concurred with the views put forward by

these witnesses. There was, he observed, nothing improper in Mr. Davies's show ; nevertheless, it could not be permitted to blight inoffensive persons' lives. The organ with twenty-seven trumpets, he had been given to understand, was an excellent organ of its kind ; but it evidently played one tune a good deal too often for the comfort of Mr. Baker's neighbours. People would shout when excited by the joys of steam circuses, swings, and merry-go-rounds ; outcry was a necessary consequence of the exhilaration produced by such amusements ; but, though harmless in itself, when uttered in a back yard of a populous district it clearly constituted a nuisance. Hence, the learned Judge granted the injunction claimed by Mr. Samuel Winter, and condemned the defendants to pay the costs of the action.

English folk—especially those of the poorer classes—are not as a rule surfeited by recreations suitable to their tastes or intelligence. Their lives, in fact, are more than necessarily dull, and the disposition too frequently evinced by their social superiors to grudge them reasonable indulgence in the pastimes which they really appreciate and relish is strongly to be deprecated. The State does little to provide the sort of entertainments to the attractions of which the working classes are most keenly susceptible ; and private enterprise experiences almost insurmountable difficulties in catering for their diversion without coming into collision with the law of the land, as in the case above referred to. Proprietors of open-air shows of the kind to delight the people who would be bored to death by museums

and picture galleries, if they could be induced to visit them, know full well that they are sure to be worsted in any legal contest with "respectable householders," to whom noise is an abomination, and who care not a single cheeseparing whether or not their humbler fellow-citizens are amused, so long as they themselves are guaranteed the enjoyment of undisturbed peace and quiet. In London, more particularly, there appears to prevail a settled resolve on the part of the well-to-do inhabitants, inflexibly enforced by the authorities, to sweep all al-fresco recreations from the streets, save and except wheezing barrel organs and bellowing German bands. The holding of fairs is not permitted in the Royal parks, and is strictly prohibited even on the greens with which metropolitan suburbs abound.

There are, beyond a doubt, hundreds of thousands of Londoners, insensible to the pleasures of "the higher culture," who, consciously or unconsciously, yearn to contemplate "iron-jawed ladies, the wonder of the world," such as figured at Mr. William Davies's show, attracting curious throngs to the back yard of the model lodging-house in King's Road, Brentwood. Dwarfs, giants, Siamese calves, mermen, bearded or pig-faced matrons, sanguinary five-act dramas performed at the rate of three minutes an act, swings that generate nausea and roundabouts that promote giddiness, twining acrobats, grinning Aunt Sallies, delusive knock-'em-downs, and, above all, organs fitted with from two to three score trumpets blown by steam, afford more true and hearty gratification to the million than any number of sarcophagi and stuffed birds, or

even of Raphaels and Carlo Dolces. Yet where can the million see and hear these pleasure-giving things within the wide precincts of the Postal District? Not even in Leicester Square, where the constant contemplation of Shakespeare's statue, though suggestive of many interesting considerations, has been more than once known to pall upon the intelligent British workman; nor in any public open space in or about this dull and unwieldy capital.

They manage these matters very differently abroad. In Paris, for instance, street fairs are of such frequent recurrence that the "respectable" classes have more than once taken steps to bring about their suppression. One of the protests against these saturnalia recently laid before the Municipal Council was based on the large number of Germans hired by showmen to perform feats of strength and dexterity. There is scarcely a town of any importance in Germany, with the exception of Berlin, which does not indulge in high jinks once a year at its annual Kermesse; and the "Modern Athens" itself tolerates a Weihnachtsmarkt "sub Jove" every Christmas on the huge stone square fronting the Royal Castle, as well as on the stately Leipziger Platz. In the easy-going, live-and-let-live Kaiserstadt on the Danube, a mighty fair is kept open on the green sward of the Wurstl-Prater, or Sausage Park, throughout the spring, summer, and autumn months of every year. There every description of cheap and astonishing entertainment that human ingenuity can devise is offered to the pleasure-loving Viennese, who are never weary of visiting booths, shooting at the mark, capering in

dancing saloons, revolving on wooden chargers of impassive mien to the strains of "The Beautiful Blue Danube," or listening to the admirable performances of the military bands generously permitted to contribute to their enjoyment on high days and holidays. From April to October the Sausage Park daily teems with penny diversions, music, and mirth. Excellent beer and plain, inexpensive edibles are dispensed to the public at half-a-dozen spacious wooden pavilions, surrounded by scores of strong tables and chairs, amongst which meander the itinerant vendors of sausage, for the most part Italians, whose privilege of selling their toothsome wares in this part of the Prater first endowed the people's pleasaunce with its predicate of "Wurstl." From these active and vociferous merchants may be purchased every variety of the "farcimentum" so dear to Germans and Italians alike, under the names of mettwurst, salami, leberwurst, mortadella, bratwurst, blutwurst, Frankfuerter, and a dozen other sorts of highly flavoured, thirst-creating compounds of meat, spice, and garlic. Many kinds of cheese, retailed by peripatetic hawkers, at ten kreuzers a slice, are also on hand in the Wurstl-Prater, where, with the aid of the inimitable Viennese bread and beer, a savoury and sufficient meal need not cost its consumer more than the equivalent, in Austrian currency, of tenpence sterling. Moreover, the prices of admission to the booths and shows are so low that a holiday-making Kaiserstaedter of simple tastes and moderate requirements can nourish and amuse himself throughout a long summer day without exceeding the limits of a paper

florin in the matter of pecuniary outlay. The rulers of Austria and of other Continental countries are well aware that cheap and frequent recreations keep the working classes in good humour, and render them easily governable. Hence they wisely foster institutions of the description above referred to. Constituted authority in England could not do better than follow their example in this regard ; for, to amplify a familiar old proverb, "All work and no play makes Johnny Bull a dismal and discontented boy."

## ROSES AND RAILWAYS.

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THE "wilding Rose" of Scott—the "bewildering Rose" of Morris—who would have thought that, even in so prosaic an age as ours, the Queen of the Garden, the "flower of Love," would be pressed into the service of utilitarian man for the commonplace purpose of protecting railway lines against the hindrance of traffic and locomotion caused by drifting snow? Roses wither under the chill blasts of autumn; winter's icy breath lulls them into a death-like sleep, from which they only awaken when lusty summer has fully reasserted his sway over the regenerate earth. Only under the protection afforded to them by science do they flourish with artificial vigour throughout the grim wintry months, not yielding up the treasures of their beauty and sweetness to the many, with the unstinted bounteousness dictated by Nature, but rejoicing the perceptive senses of the few, privileged by the accident of wealth to purchase their unseasonable and costly charms. Whilst the hothouse rose is blooming in all her splendour of colour and delicacy of perfume, her unsophisticated sister, the dog-rose—her ancestress, rather, to whose love-passages with the briar she owes

her very existence—is slumbering deeply, cast into a long-enduring trance by the mighty spell of the Frost-King. Even during her hybernal lethargy, however, the hardy rose of the fields and plains, as it would seem, renders good service to mankind by guarding the silent steel highways that link town to town and country to country.

Exceptional opportunities have been afforded to Continental railway companies by the heavy snowfalls of several past winters for testing the efficacy of the various means devised by experienced engineers for the protection of their "permanent ways" against snow-drifts. Of all the results hitherto obtained by experiment in this direction the most satisfactory have been rendered by rose-hedges, fringing either side of the railway line. The rose-tree exclusively utilised for these fences is that popularly known as the "rosier de Provence." In Lower Hungary, where the iron road traverses long stretches of flat country akin in conformation and aspect to the Russian steppes or to the prairies of Western America, hedges of rose-trees, thick and tall, cover both flanks of the snow-beset metals, and repel the fiercest onslaughts of their fleecy foe. On the State railways of the Banat, in the out-lying regions of Magyarland, a section of the line nearly a mile and a half in length, which in former years invariably became blocked by the snow, was kept clear during the abnormally heavy falls of the 1888-9 winter by one of these double rose-hedges, averaging six feet six inches in height and about three feet in thickness. This stout bulwark—in summer-time bisecting the dusky "puszta" with twin-streaks of gay green,

aglow with rich colour and redolent of sweet fragrance—successfully withstood the fury of the snow-laden tempests which repeatedly swept over Eastern Europe, enwrapping thousands of square miles of territory in a cold white mantle, of such density and weight that whole villages and countless homesteads vanished for the time being under its frozen folds.

Although, no doubt, strictly practical considerations suggested the planting of these avenues of rose-bushes which were instrumental in keeping open an arterial line of communication between Central and Eastern Europe throughout some of the severest weather experienced for many a year past, the expedient adopted by the Hungarian Staatsbahn for protecting its traffic against interruption bears a romantic aspect that might well furnish a theme to poetical inspiration. It requires but little imaginative effort to picture to the mind's eye a summer journey gladdened by the glory of roses, shining to the right and left of a swiftly gliding steam chariot, while the surrounding atmosphere is fraught with faintly subtle scents which superinduce a soft languor in the fortunate traveller. Such sights and odours have hitherto been rarely allotted to tourists dependent upon railway locomotion for their transport through strange countries. They may be found in the plains of Persia, where “roses are bright by the calm Bendemeer,” and in the Roumelian lowlands, adjoining the southern and eastern slopes of the rugged Balkan range. Between Tatar-Bazar and Adrianople the horseman following the post-road on a sultry June day rides, mile after mile, through enormous rose-plantations, blazing with scarlet and crimson, and giving out odours

well-nigh as overpowering as that of the attar distilled from their gorgeous blossoms. In those fields of queen flowers he may gaze his fill on "the damask rose, Whose rare mixture doth disclose Beauties pencils cannot feign," and test by experiment the truth of brave old John Marston's dainty lines : " Having clasped a rose Within my palm, the rose being ta'en away, My hand retains a little breath of sweet." The uncounted millions of roses grown in Roumelia are not merely turned to account by the rose-farmers for sale to the preparers of that powerful essence which, enclosed in long, slender, carefully stoppered bottles lettered with gold, is still so popular throughout the East, although it has quite gone out of fashion in this country. Many tons' weight of their leaves, gathered and packed whilst they are freshly fallen, are converted into rose-jam, one of the exquisite conserves which under the generic name of "dulchatz," are so admirably confected in Turkey, Greece, and Roumania, and constitute a leading feature in the light but toothsome refection offered to the casual visitor in every well-to-do Oriental household. Rose-jam, considered as a sweetmeat, is far superior in flavour and savour to Rahat Lakoum, and to the somewhat cloying preparations of angelica for which certain Stamboul confectioners are justly famous. It is by no means sickly, or even insipid, as those delicacies unquestionably are, but is characterised by an after-taste no less brisk and refreshing than that of the black cherry "dulchatz," paragon of all Turkish sweets.

There is but little hope that English railway lines will be hedged in by belts of rose-trees, with a view to guard them against the encroachments of the drifting

snow, or in order to gratify the eyes and noses of British excursionists with infinite varieties of colour and faintly perfumed airs. Roses are comparatively expensive articles in this country, the climate of which, moreover, is not favourable to their luxuriant growth "sub Jove frigido," except under conditions involving their careful culture and assiduous tending. Much, however, might be done to render many of our iron roads—or at least their immediate surroundings—less monotonously hideous than they are at the present time. The bare slopes of embankments and cuttings alike might often be planted, tastefully, and not unprofitably, with trees and under-wood. Where the track passes through a level district it might be enclosed with green hedges, sufficiently hardy and close in texture to stay the driving snow in winter-time, and solacing to the traveller's gaze when dressed out in their summer garb of verdant leaves and wild flowers. In many a country station the spare ground is often turned into a garden of exquisite beauty highly creditable to the taste and skill of the local officials; but in too many other cases little trouble is taken to embellish either side of the permanent way, or even to cultivate the available garden ground comprised in the company's territorial "concession." Railways, it may be said by doctrinaires of the Gradgrind school, are meant for use, not for ornament. Granted; but I would venture to observe that their decoration with flowers in no respect impairs their utility, whilst rendering them manifestly less unattractive than they would otherwise be. Englishmen who have travelled through Southern Germany, the Austrian Duchies, Bohemia, and the Tyrol will

remember with pleasure the pretty gardens and shady groves attached to many of the humbler provincial stations in those countries ; the trellised vines and gracefully trained creepers, the gay beds and borders of hardy annuals, the devices in growing flowers of bright hues, the well-kept kitchen gardens on upward and downward inclines hard by the lines of rails, wherever the soil is of a sufficiently fertile character to permit of that class of cultivation. It is especially noticeable in the more civilised States of the Austrian Empire that railway servants avail themselves of every small parcel of ground placed at their disposal by their employers—who wisely encourage them to be industrious in this particular direction—for the growth of vegetables, raising of flowers, or planting of vines, trees, and evergreen shrubs. These worthy people set an example to English country station-masters, porters, and signalmen which the latter might follow more extensively than is the case at present, though I could point to not a few railway station gardens in various parts of the kingdom equal in beauty to anything of the sort than can be seen abroad. Rose-hedges, I fear, are out of the question in connection with the iron roads of Great Britain. It is a pity ; for, according to Gerald Massey, “As the wild rose bloweth, As runs the happy river, Kindness freely floweth In the heart for ever.” But a fringe of hawthorn and briar, costing little to plant and nothing to keep up, would prove a decided adornment to many a long, dull stretch of railway at present absolutely forlorn of that, or, indeed, any other visible attraction.

## THE SOCIETY COOK.

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A PORTION of the evidence adduced in the course of some curious proceedings that took place some months ago in the Marylebone Police-court, shed instructive light upon what would appear to be a recently developed branch of an ancient and justly honoured profession. It revealed, indeed, the existence of a new variety of culinary artist, henceforth to be known by the designation of "the Society Cook." Londoners learned with surprise and gratification that there were amongst them certain benefactors of their species who, having publicly or privately dealt with food for some years in such sort as to acquire a widely spread social reputation for skilful cookery, had renounced their position as salaried ministrants to the gastronomic requirements of the clubs, restaurants, or families in whose service they have earned fame, had hired and luxuriously furnished houses in fashionable quarters of the town, and there awaited custom, ever ready to prepare nutritious and succulent meals for their clients, who, it was stated, consisted exclusively of "real ladies" and "gentlemen of the highest respectability." These distinguished persons—presumably *gourmets* of

great refinement and delicacy of taste—were, and possibly still are enabled, by the aid of such establishments as those above referred to, to indulge their predilection for artistically cooked food without incurring any of that publicity to which so many epicures, especially of the softer sex, entertain an invincible objection in connection with the consumption of their repasts. They had no difficulty in securing a table to themselves, as in the restaurant *à la mode*; they were not compelled to sit in the same room with people whom they did not know, or, haply, knew and disliked—to listen involuntarily to the idle chatter of frivolous neighbours, and take nasal cognisance of the odours of other diners' meals as well as of their own—to hurry away from the scene of their costly but unsatisfactory banquet as soon as they had swallowed their last mouthful of food or wine, in order to escape from an over-heated atmosphere, tainted with the twang of many sauces, roasts, and cheeses. This kind of heterogeneous fragrance, though by no means repugnant to the nostrils of a hungry man, is well-nigh intolerable to those of one who has eaten his fill. At the house of the "Society Cook" no client was constrained to smell any dinner save that which he or she had personally ordered and consumed; for each customer was served in a separate dining-room, to which a supplementary chamber was attached—possibly a whole suite of supplementary chambers, so that gratified *gourmets* could, without much difficulty, escape from an atmosphere redolent of sauces, to enjoy in a purer ether and another room the memory of

the delicacies with which the "Society Cook" had fed them.

The more one contemplates the arrangements of this beneficent artist, as described in the Marylebone Police-court, the more plainly one perceives that they disclose long vistas of bliss readily attainable to the wealthy lover of good cheer. Everybody in society numbers amongst his acquaintance many "real ladies" and "gentlemen of the highest respectability" who delight in *recherché* dinners, but are unable to enjoy them in their own or their friends' houses, owing to the defective knowledge or narrow-minded conservatism of the average British cook. Such persons, endowed alike with the will and the means to dine *secundum artem*, have hitherto been forced to batten upon ill-prepared edibles at home, or to patronise some restaurant, where—although they may be fairly sure of securing a well-cooked dinner—they are bound to accept a *menu* the composition of which may be at variance with their most hallowed gastronomic principles. All that these victims of domestic culinary incompetency will have to do for the future will be, after having ascertained the address of a celebrated "Society Cook," to forward a few dozens of their favourite vintages to that artist's establishment, and then to apprise her every morning, by post-card or "wire," of the hour at which they intend to profit by her ripe judgment and executant ability. As that hour strikes—for punctuality is no less essential to the consumer than to the preparer of a repast absolutely *à point*—the real lady or perfect gentleman—

peradventure both these distinguished personages, united for the time being by a common purpose—will drive up to the door of an unpretending but carefully appointed private house in a quiet West End street, there alight, and take temporary possession of a comfortable apartment in which the pleasures of the table, organised by consummate science and dispensed with exquisite taste, will await them.

Whilst fully recognising the extraordinary value of the advantages thus held out—for a consideration, of course—to society by the cook or cooks of its own preferential selection, one cannot but think regretfully of the melancholy destiny that condemns a vast majority of Her Majesty's lieges to suffer day by day—year in and year out—the torments of bad cookery. It is a mournful but undeniable fact that the middle and lower classes of Englishmen, with the best food-material in the world at their disposal, are constrained throughout life, by circumstances apparently beyond their control, to eat comestibles that are wastefully and unintelligently prepared for the table—unappetising to the eye, and ungratifying to the palate. Let it be acknowledged, to our national humiliation and sorrow; the British "plain cook" is a baneful being. She professes to be able to "boil and roast"; as a rule she can do neither, save in the most elementary or perfunctory manner. In connection with domestic cookery, indeed, the art of roasting—for proficiency in which English cooks were deservedly renowned as far back in history as the days of the Tudors—is no longer practised in this country. The glowing wood fire and the steadily

revolving spit, factors of such paramount importance in the achievement of a perfect roast, have vanished from our kitchens ; even the clockwork jack is regarded with disfavour by many cooks of the "plain" category as archaic and troublesome, the latter chiefly on account of the watchfulness exacted by its gyrations.

As the shrewd French proverb hath it, "One becomes a cook, but one is born a roaster." Unhappily for us, Nature seldom favours males or females of the Anglo-Saxon persuasion by bestowing upon them, at the moment of their birth, the inestimable roasting gift. To thrust a joint of meat or a fowl into an oven, and let it stop there until it is "done," is an operation calling for no intellectual effort on the part of the functionary who performs it. Hence it is that, in this country, viands which, to do their natural qualities justice, should be roasted, are almost invariably baked, to the manifest detriment of their appearance and flavour. Let any unprejudiced person compare the sensations experienced whilst eating a British barn-door pullet that has passed through the dread ordeal of the oven, with those attendant upon the consumption of a French *poularde* roasted on a spit before a quick wood fire, and who can doubt that he will cordially proclaim the vast superiority of the latter process to the former ?

If the French are the most accomplished roasters in Europe—and I hold this to be an indisputable fact—none the less are Italians the champion fryers. What Englishman of cultivated tastes who has partaken of the crisp, delicate *frittura*, obtainable in the humblest trattoria of the Ausonian peninsula, can fail to deplore

the pitiable ignorance of the frying art that prevails throughout his beloved native land? Not that English cooks are averse to frying. On the contrary, they fry a great deal too much, being perversely addicted to substitute the frying-pan for the gridiron in cases with relation to which the latter's claim to be enthroned upon the red-hot kitchen fire is paramount and indefeasible. They fry—to their shame be it recorded—steaks, and chops, and kidneys, every one of which toothsome edibles has an inborn right to be broiled *sur le gril*. And how do they fry them, ten times of twelve? Alas! in such sort as to blacken and harden their surface, beneath which the main substance of the meat, robbed of its rich juices, lies gray and tasteless. Scarcely less rudimentary and unreasonable is their method of boiling. I refer, of course, to the procedures practised by the average "plain cook," one of the ordinary British householder's most harrowing and irremediable afflictions. There are exceptions, noble and brilliant ones, to the rule that guides her professional actions—the rule that is so disastrously observed by many of her social betters, entrusted with the administration of our public affairs—"How not to do it."

When one reflects how large a proportion of the potential happiness and comfort of every-day life, to the enjoyment of which every well-conducted human being is justified in aspiring, depends upon the skill with which his or her diurnal nutriment is cooked, one is lost in astonishment at the apathy of a nation that endures such chronic wrongs with unbroken patience, and at the lack of enterprise which deters Englishmen

from endeavouring to bring about a radical and comprehensive improvement in the quality of their domestic cookery. Why should Frenchmen, confessedly wanting in the strength of will and steadfastness of purpose which have characterised the Anglo-Saxon race for a thousand years past, be uniformly successful as a people in the practice of wholesome, succulent, and economical cookery, whilst we, although profoundly conscious of our shortcomings in this regard, continue to put up with cooks whose daily deeds are practical negations of the culinary art? The Germans, though far from equalling their hereditary foes in the daintiness and variety of their dishes, are better cooks than we. So are the Italians. So, in more than one important respect—notably in roasting, frying, and the confection of pastry and sweets—are even the “unspeakable” Turks. Why is this thus? Is it because of our innate Conservatism and “grooviness,” which makes us reluctant to accept innovations, or depart from the habits in which we have been erroneously brought up? Or is it by reason of a dearth of educational institutions, in which persons experiencing a predisposition to study the excellent mysteries of cookery might receive instruction therein from adepts in that “joyous science,” and thus be enabled at least to master the fundamental principles of their profession? The British nation pauses for a reply to questions which, considered in their true relation to the well-being and contentment of many millions of Englishmen, appear to be of far more immediate interest and moment than most of the pretentious problems of party politics.

## GUILDHALL.

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“**THERE** are no traditions more illustrious than those which cluster around the Guildhall.” This frank recognition of the historical importance of our magnificent civic aula was pronounced by Sir William Harcourt in the course of a speech made by him when introducing his Municipal Bill to the House of Commons. With respect to the ancient Corporation of the City of London, the whilom Home Secretary left no doubt as to his desire to “reform it altogether.” He and those who supported him in bringing forward the measure in question were eagerly bent upon improving London’s venerable Municipality off the face of the earth. They would fain have shorn the institution itself of its time-honoured rights and privileges, but expressly disclaimed any wish to do away with the fine old palace which is identified in the public mind with so many of its glories. “I should be as adverse,” observed Sir William Harcourt on the occasion above mentioned, “to destroying the Guildhall as to destroying Westminster Hall or the Abbey.” In this declaration the vast majority of Englishmen concur.

No public edifice in this metropolis has through-

out many successive centuries been so continuously identified with the history of the City as has its Guildhall. As its latest historian, Mr. J. E. Price, forcibly points out, it has been associated in one way or another with almost every occurrence of paramount importance recorded in the annals of this country since the days of King Henry III. "Whether such occurrences have been related to Royalty, polities, law, commerce, or public ceremonial"—I quote from Mr. Price's "Descriptive Account of the Guildhall"—"and whether we contemplate its connection with incidents chronicled by Shakespeare, with the turbulent gatherings or gorgeous pageants of the Middle Ages, the trials of Lady Jane Grey, her ill-fated husband, and the aged Cranmer, and, later on, with the peaceful and influential meetings of our own times, the edifice is one which, with the citizens of London, must command an interest unsurpassed by that attached to any other of their public buildings."

Etymological authorities differ about the derivation of the word "guild," Herbert ascribing its origin to the Saxon verb "gildan," Anglice "to pay," and recalling the fact that "gildare" in Domesday Book is used as a synonym of "solvere" and "reddere"—to pay or render. Black, on the other hand, asserts that "gild" is a true and pure British noun, signifying "contribution," or that which is produced or contributed; whilst Johnson remarks that the word is found in old French, early German and Icelandic, always with the meaning of "a fraternity or commonalty of men gathered together into one combination,

supporting their common charge by mutual contribution." All these learned personages agree, however, that a Guildhall was originally the appointed place in which the burgesses of a city yielded or paid their taxes. Hence the spellings of the word "Yield Hall" and "Yeldehall" that occur in the early records of our municipal corporations, more particularly those of London and Reading. In the Latin chronicles and charters of the Plantagenet Kings it most frequently appears as "Gilda Aula," but is here and there referred to in those historical documents under the contracted designations of "Gihalda," "Gyaula," and "Gildaula." In an "Inquisition" issued by Edward III. in the thirtieth year of his reign, A.D. 1356, it is mentioned as the "Gihalle."

According to Stow, the original Guildhall of London was situated on the east side of Aldermanbury, and the first authentic record of its existence appears in a grant of land and rents made to the Church of St. Mary at Osney, by one Renery, a Sheriff of the City, in the year 1189. Early in the thirteenth century it is mentioned in the Hustings Rolls as "le Bur' de la Guildhall." The building alluded to in these muniments was found inadequate to civic requirements little more than two hundred years after the supposed date of its construction, and in the year 1411, Thomas Knowles, grocer, twice Mayor of London, and the direct ancestor of the Earls of Banbury, being then in office, a new building was commenced; or, as Robert Fabyan quaintly put it in his "Chronicle," "an olde and lytell cottage was made into a fayre and goodly howse."

The design of the new Guildhall, like that of Crosby Hall and of the Carpenters' Hall, both dating from the fifteenth century, was Gothic of a very fine and pure order. So heavy were the expenses incurred by the municipality for the erection of this noble edifice that, although the City Companies contributed large "benevolences" to the building fund, the Common Council found itself compelled to impose extraordinary fees, fines, and amercements upon burgesses, freemen, and apprentices for nine consecutive years; and further orders to similar effect were passed at the expiration of that period, being renewed at intervals until the year 1439. Meanwhile, the executors of Richard Whittington subscribed handsome sums towards defraying the cost of paving the "great Hall with hard stone of Purbeck," and glazing some of the windows, and a part of the tolls of London Bridge was affected to cognate purposes. The building was completed towards the close of the first half of the fifteenth century, and, some forty years later, its roof was adorned with two "louvres," or lantern-turrets, at the expense of William Hariot, then Lord Mayor of London.

Another Lord Mayor, Sir Henry Barton, bequeathed large sums for the rebuilding and endowment of the chapel attached to Guildhall. It was to this wealthy and public-spirited citizen that London owed its first organised system of street-lighting, in the execution of which two thousand constables were employed. The Guildhall of his time, adorned and enriched by several successive generations of opulent Londoners, endured

in ever-increasing splendour until the Great Fire of London in 1666, when it suffered almost irreparable damage, being completely gutted by the flames. The old Gothic walls, however, withstood the ravages of that tremendous conflagration. Portions of them are still visible, and a considerable amount of the original frontage remains concealed behind the present Saracenic facing. When this shall be taken down—an improvement that is in contemplation—the grand fifteenth century work will be restored to view, its architectural features little altered from the aspect they presented when Plantagenets and Tudors reigned over merry England. The restoration of the hall after its partial destruction by fire cost about thirty-five thousand pounds—a considerable sum two centuries ago, even for the richest city of Europe—and was felt to be so onerous an undertaking, in common with other public works rendered necessary by the “dreadfull conflagration,” that the Corporation petitioned Charles II. for an Act of Parliament empowering them to levy a duty upon all coals entering the port of London.

The first banquet held in Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day was given by Sir Edmund Shaa in the year 1482, since which date the entertainments organised within the walls of our municipal palace have been distinguished, down to the present day, for their sumptuousness and splendour. Amongst the earlier civic feasts was one arranged in honour of the birth of an English Prince, the son of King Edward II, and his lovely consort, Queen Isabel. In 1357, just a twelvemonth after the great victory of Poictiers, the

Corporation entertained King John of France and Edward the Black Prince at dinner in the Guildhall, to celebrate the successes of the previous year's campaign. Henry V., on his return from France in November, 1415, after having overthrown the power of the French King at Agincourt, was a guest of the City in its then new hall. The magnificence of his reception is detailed in the "Chronicles of Holinshed." Four years later he again dined in the Guildhall; Richard Whittington—knighted on that occasion—being his host. The Lord Mayor had lent to His Majesty a sum of money equivalent in value to six hundred thousand pounds of our present currency. While the King was admiring the huge fire, scented with cinnamon and other spices, that had been made up in the banqueting-room, Whittington produced the Royal bonds for the above amount, and burned them in the perfumed flames. "Never," exclaimed King Harry, "had Prince such a subject!" and Sir Richard promptly replied, "Never, Sire, had subject such a Prince!" In the year 1554, Philip and Mary were received with great pomp at Guildhall shortly after their marriage. Charles I. dined there with the Mayor and Corporation in 1641, on his return from Scotland; and his son took such pleasure in civic hospitality that he feasted at the Hall no fewer than nine times in the course of his reign.

Well-nigh every English King and Queen since the expulsion of the Stuarts has sate at the Municipal board profusely spread at the feet of Gog and Magog. Shortly after her accession to the throne, Queen

Victoria dined with the City magnates on Lord Mayor's Day, fifty-one years ago. Seven hundred guests attended the banquet, at the conclusion of which Her Majesty conferred a baronetcy on Lord Mayor Cowan, and knighthood on Sheriffs Montefiore and Carroll. The Queen again visited the City in 1844 and 1851, since which time Guildhall has been honoured by the presence of several foreign potentates, magnificently entertained by the Municipality during their respective visits to the British capital. Amongst the Crowned Heads thus welcomed to the City were Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie; Victor Emanuel, the "Honest King"; Sultan Abdul Aziz of Turkey; Nasr-ed-deen, Shah of Persia; the late Alexander II., Czar of All the Russias; and George I., King of the Hellenes. Guildhall has, indeed, for five centuries past been the typical head-quarters of English national hospitality, with the lavishness and cordiality of which it is identified in men's minds throughout every quarter of the habitable globe. Long may it continue to be so, and, its old architectural beauties restored to their pristine splendour, may it be preserved to the City of London for many ages to come as a stately and significant monument of that city's imperishable grandeur and glory.

## PARIS BELEAGUERED.

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IN an interesting volume, M. Edouard Thierry, formerly manager of the Comédie Française, has recalled to the memory of his fellow-countrymen many curious particulars of the thrilling episode in French history which, during the years 1870-1, directly and indirectly connected the "House of Molière" with both sieges of the French capital. From the date of the declaration of war with Germany to that of the final overthrow of the Commune by the troops of the Republic, the staff of the classical theatre, "pensionnaires" and "sociétaires" alike, maintained a highly patriotic attitude. As long as the belief, or even the hope, endured that the French arms might prove victorious in their encounters with the "Teutonic hordes," the leading actors and actresses sang war-songs and national hymns between the acts of the plays set down for nightly performance. When a series of military disasters culminated in the crowning catastrophe of Sedan, carrying with it the final fall of the Napoleonic *régime* and the certainty that Paris would, sooner or later, be subjected to the horrors of a siege, the Comédie Française was promptly closed, and the members of its inimitable company put off the sock

and buskin for a while, induing in their stead army uniform or ambulance garb, as their respective sexes dictated. The men took to the ramparts with rifle and bayonet; the women to the hospital wards with lint and bandages.

All these skilled and popular artists, with one or two trifling and unimportant exceptions, did their duty nobly to their country during the weary investment and the harassing bombardments which so sorely tried the patience and fortitude of the Parisians throughout the cruel winter of "*l'année terrible*." Their own theatre, the scene of so many dramatic triumphs and brilliant social gatherings, was converted into an ambulance, the bedding and linen for dressings being supplied by actresses of renown, one of whom, as M. Thierry has told his readers, sent to him a fine portrait of Racine—her personal property—begging him to take charge of it during the siege, and to present it on her behalf to the theatre, "in case she should be killed on the fortifications while attending upon the wounded."

From first to last the ambulance of the *Comédie Française* was admirably conducted and administered. Those among the sick and wounded defenders of Paris whose good fortune secured to them participation in its benefits had every reason to congratulate themselves upon having fallen into the tender hands of the fair and kindly exponents of French dramatic art, who spent their days and nights in succouring the victims of hostile lead and steel, of privation, and of exposure to the inclemencies of the weather. The officers' ward

was established in the gallery of busts, and the private soldiers were comfortably accommodated in the large public “foyer,” or crush-room. As the winter advanced, and provisions and fuel became so scarce within the precincts of the beleaguered city that wholesome food and combustible wood could hardly be procured for love or money, the inmates of this particular ambulance were never once allowed to want for any of the comforts that might mitigate their sufferings and hasten their recovery. Their generous and indefatigable nurses, by the practice of one ingenious expedient or another, and above all by inexhaustible self-sacrifice, contrived to keep them supplied with abundant nourishment of excellent quality, whilst cheering their spirits by countless pleasant contrivances for passing away the time which seems so unnaturally long and tedious to the tenant of a sick-bed.

M. Thierry's published reminiscences could not fail to awaken kindred memories in the minds of many thousands of living Parisians who some twenty years ago were shut up in the *enceinte* of Lutetia's huge girdle of forts, bastions, and walls. Towards the end of October, 1870, although the investment had barely lasted six weeks, all outward and visible signs of luxury had vanished from the streets. Not a livery was to be seen on the box or footboard of a private carriage. At ten p.m. every restaurant and *café* was closed, and the boulevards were darksome and silent. Almost all the caterers of public entertainments had shut up their establishments in despair, for the Parisians no longer wanted to be amused, their capacity for indulging in

laughter being temporarily suspended. Horseflesh had already become a staple of their diet, and bakers' bread was daily waxing more and more unpalatable. Life was very grim and gloomy; worse still, it was intolerably dull. A fortnight later the issue of fresh-meat rations came to an end. It was on November 11 that the *Figaro* commenced its leading article upon the defence of Paris with the ominous words, "Il n'y a plus de viande fraîche!" Thenceforth the diurnal dole of animal food distributed by the arrondissement authorities to the holders of "bons," or ration-cards, consisted of "salaison"—sometimes pickled beef or pork, but, far more frequently, salted horse.

This indication of a serious falling-off in their stock of vivers painfully intensified the despondency by which the naturally vivacious population of Paris had been affected for some days previous to its compulsory change of diet. Moreover, the provisions which were still purchasable in markets and shops had attained a pecuniary value placing them entirely above the reach of the lower middle classes. Dogs, cats, and rats, early in December, figured in the *menus* of the third and fourth class restaurants, whilst the more fashionable eating-houses offered to their wealthy customers, at inordinate prices, portions of the whilom inmates of the Jardin des Plantes, for the most part slaughtered to save the expenses of their keep. Before Christmas-tide it was possible, by paying three or four pounds at one of the great cafés on the Boulevard, to make a copious but perplexing meal upon viands selected from the menagerie—camel steaks, elephant fillets, bear

hams, and “tournedos de mouflon.” Horseflesh had become well-nigh as scarce as bullock beef, and was a costly luxury, only to be partaken of by the exceptionally well-to-do. To such straits had a three months’ siege brought the inhabitants of the gayest and —save one—the richest capital in Christendom.

Scarcely less dismal were the life-conditions of the unfortunate people inhabiting the broad belt of territory round Paris occupied by the investing German army. The besiegers, of course, ate and drank their fill, and of the best, and warmed their quarters comfortably with “requisitioned” fuel. Versailles, the seat of the Royal Prussian head-quarters, had been a prosperous town, unfamiliar with any manifestations of poverty or distress, until it fell under the occupation of a hostile army. It was a favourite abiding-place of pensioned officials, small “rentiers,” retired tradesmen, and Legitimist families of slender means; people who, as a rule, lived up to their revenues for the best of all possible reasons—because their revenues were only just large enough to live upon. Their incomes, for the most part, were derived from French Rentes—“inscriptions sur le Grand Livre,” as such investments are denominated in France—and, the “Great Book” being shut up inside Paris, these luckless beings were unable to touch a centime of their dividends throughout several successive months. Having no savings in hard cash whatsoever to fall back upon, they were compelled to part with their plate, wines, jewellery, and other valuables for what they would fetch—little enough in a place where everybody wanted to sell and nobody to buy.

When these slight resources were exhausted, the wretched Versaillais, including many aged ladies and gentlemen of ancient lineage but exiguous fortune, found themselves perforce constrained to suffer the pangs of slow starvation, aggravated by intense cold. At a time when the weather was almost unbearably severe the price of coal in Versailles was a hundred francs per ton, and "kindling" wood fetched sixty francs for a small cartload. The town had to supply the German garrison—including the three head-quarters of the King, Crown Prince, and General von Kirchbach—with eighty-four tons of fuel daily, at its own expense, having already complied with "requisitions" to the value of sixty thousand pounds, and provided billets at different times for as many soldiers. Grass grew in its less frequented thoroughfares; business, wholesale and retail, was at a standstill; destitution of the most distressing kind prevailed throughout every class of native society, from the highest to the lowest. Venerable French noblemen, generals and colonels *en retraite*, ladies of high birth and unimpeachable social station might be seen any morning in the broad avenues of the once aristocratic little city, hunting about for dead branches and twigs fallen from the leafless trees, picking them up and packing them carefully in baskets, such waifs and strays of fuel being all they had to look to for cooking their miserable meals or warming their chilled and shivering old bodies. "Grandes dames de par le monde," unable to maintain a servant, were fain to do their household work and poor marketing themselves. Marchionesses bargained sorrowfully for faded

cabbages ; Countesses cheapened cauliflowers, salt herrings, and coarse rye-bread ; graybeard warriors, with the rosette of the Legion still ruddy in their button-holes, toiled along the snow-covered sidewalks, struggling against the weight of a few pounds of potatoes. Many an even sadder sight than these was witnessed by the denizens of Versailles during the siege of Paris—amongst them the writer of these lines, and a few other Englishmen, who are not likely to forget their experiences of a winter in the head-quarters of the victorious German army, within a stone's throw of the Palace dedicated by Louis XIV. “to all the glories of France.”

## DECORATIVE DINING.

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THERE is nothing new under the sun. History repeats itself with monotonous regularity, and the events of every age have successively proved to the more observant of those witnessing them that what has been in the past is reproduced in the present, and will certainly recur in the future. Innovations, even when suggested by the active and fertile American genius, if examined by the bright and unflickering light of erudition, generally turn out to be mere revivals, more or less inadequate and inexact, of practices that have had their day in some bygone time, and have fallen into desuetude by reason of their unsuitability to the wants or manners of a subsequent epoch. To this rule, of course, there are exceptions, though few and far between. The latest fashionable "novelty" promulgated in Boston society cannot claim to be one of these. It is an æsthetic revival—harmless, classical, and decorative, but as void of originality as a Westminster Play or a plaster cast of the Laocoön group. According to a Transatlantic periodical published in that city of light and leading proudly described by its inhabitants as "the hub of the universe," certain Boston ladies of paramount authority

in relation to social exercises have succeeded in organising dinner-parties on the old ornate Greek pattern. It would appear that the delights of "yellow breakfasts" and the pleasures of "pink teas"—entertainments in the mysteries of which we benighted islanders are as yet uninitiated—have palled upon the enterprising leaders of fashion in the Massachusetts capital, who have consequently addressed themselves to the somewhat difficult task of reviving the antique Hellenic banquet, with all its sumptuary, floral, and culinary attributes.

A specimen feast of this description has been held in Boston, and created no inconsiderable sensation in literary and artistic society there. The table was profusely decorated with garlands of roses, its central ornament being a Grecian lyre bestrung with golden strings. Rugs concealed the walls of the dining-room from view, rugs covered the huge chairs arranged round the festive board for the accommodation of the Neo-Hellenes bidden to the banquet. These latter, presumably attired point-device in the garb of ancient Athens, wore laurel-wreaths tied with purple ribbon upon their curled and perfumed locks. More garlands of fresh-cut roses were affixed to the rug hangings above referred to. The *menu* was printed in Greek characters, a circumstance which must have somewhat mitigated its practical utility to the fair founders of the feast and to the majority of their male guests, even in Boston. Among the dishes served were wild boar, seethed kid, and roasted hare. Probably in consideration for the æsthetic sensibilities of the ladies present, the huge

blocks of beef and complete "muttons" historically associated with Homeric banquets were judiciously omitted from the bill of fare. Modern Greece manufactures wines in great variety. Whether or not they resemble in quality and flavour the grape-juice so abundantly quaffed by the Hellenic heroes of old, not even the oldest inhabitant of the Archipelago is in a position to assert with perfect confidence. No doubt they figured at the Græco-Bostonian dinner, and were imbibed with well-feigned relish by the guests of the evening, with whom I sincerely hope they agreed. About the middle of the entertainment eating was interrupted for half an hour, during which interval "burning Oriental drinks were served in silvern tankards," an intermezzo refreshment offering a lively contrast to the "punch à la Romaine" which constitutes the entr'acte of a latter-day British banquet, ingeniously devised for the purpose of creating a fictitious second appetite. He who conceived the notion of administering a frozen liquid to the diner between his *rôti* and his game must have been deeply interested in the promotion of dyspepsia among the wealthier classes of society.

A pretty as well as a comic side is discernible in this quaint feminine fad. It is, after all, an attempt to resuscitate a dead and forgotten phase of an artistic period to which mankind owes the noblest types of statuesque and architectural beauty that the world has ever known. In all probability classical grace and happy combinations of colour lent special attractions to the Greek dinner arranged by cultured Bostonian dames, with the counsel and assistance, doubtless, of

grave professors and ripe scholars deeply versed in Hellenic lore. For my part, I unhesitatingly confess that I should hail with rejoicing any change imported into the dreary monotony of English dinner-parties, so long as it did not require me to consume my victuals in a recumbent position, leaning on one elbow, or to partake of dishes prepared in accordance with some of the classical recipes which have been handed down to us by the historians and poets of Greece and Rome. I should, for instance, entertain insurmountable objections to an entrée of dormice stuffed with asafoetida and stewed in honey, even if washed down by deep draughts of red wine diluted with sea-water. Nightingales' tongues and peacocks' brains may be delicacies of surpassing savour and toothsomeness ; but any attempt to supply them to the public nowadays would most likely result in the bankruptcy of the enterprising restaurateur who should offer them, prepared *secundum artem*, to his clients.

The actual globe upon which we live, however—or at least those parts of it known to English travellers—teems with dinner-giving eccentricities, some of which might be made subjects of interesting experiment by wealthy Amphitryons, without harking back to the days of Epaminondas or Alcibiades for *menus* and table decorations. London gastronomes have still much to learn from the *gourmets* of Russia, China, and Japan. A Russian dinner—which, by the way, has but little in common with a *dîner à la Russe*, as the latter repast is understood in this country—is a highly elaborate entertainment, teeming with dainties unfamiliar to the

British palate. It is preceded by a comprehensive service of "appetisers," called "zakuska" in Russian and "Imbiss" in German, accompanied by sundry "nips" of vodka or kümmel, and opens with a course of vegetable and fish soups—"stchchi" and "borsh"—in which the average *habitué* of any London club could scarcely fail to detect the element of surprise. Chinese dinners, of a sort, have ere now been obtainable at South Kensington; but experienced epicures will admit that we do not know as much as we might easily learn about sea-slugs, juvenile pugs, and ten-year-old eggs, considered as comestibles.

Though Englishmen enjoy a universal renown for their dinner-giving propensities, they are strangely inapt at adopting the culinary *curiosa* of other peoples. So-called "French cookery" has been practised in the houses of our wealthier classes for more than half a century past, but, on the whole, with indifferent success. Even at the present day the dinners given by well-to-do Britons to their friends and acquaintances are for the most part characterised by poverty of conception, and, above all, by wearisome uniformity of arrangement. Moreover, the most palatable and wholesome of their items are certainly not the compounds *à la Française*, but the plain national "roast and boiled," to which the sons of the Island Queen instinctively cleave, however cosmopolitan they may affect to be. Our dinners, as a rule, lack variety and flavour, and last far too long. To persons of intelligence, taste, and refinement, they are in the nature of a punishment rather than of a reward. In one respect, however, they exhibit a marked improvement upon the even duller and heavier feasts of

thirty years ago. The dinner-table decorations now in vogue provide alike grateful refreshment to the eye and a fruitful subject of conversation to all lovers of pretty things. Rare and lovely flowers, gorgeous brocades and fanciful embroideries, opaline and delicately tinted glass, graceful in shape and charming in colour, golden, enamelled, and *cloisonné* spoons, gleaming porcelain, and glowing Japanese ware, all daintily set out upon snow-white napery, combine to make a really well-ordered dinner-table one of the most attractive sights that the possessor of ample means and artistic culture can offer to the contemplation of his guests. From these admirable arrangements, in virtue of a recent and most welcome reform, the lofty floral centre-pieces and other more massive ornaments, such as raised fruit-platters, and silver *épergnes*, have been banished, with the gratifying result that the *convives* are now able to command an uninterrupted view of the table decorations and of one another. London dinner-givers and diners-out still lag behind those of Boston in sumptuary enterprise, I must admit. They have not yet deemed it desirable to array themselves for the banquet in chlamys, toga, and sandals, to wreath their brows with laurels or bay-leaves, or to adorn their persons to any appreciable extent with garlands of roses, even on the most festive occasions. Despite these shortcomings on their part, which are manifestly to be regretted from a classical point of view, I venture to believe that Londoners can hold their own in the matter of tasteful and elegant table decorations with the denizens of any other capital in Christendom—even with the Bostonian aesthetes.

## EVIL CUSTOMS.

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IT is really high time that something should be done to mitigate the Custom House nuisance, which, despite all the facilities afforded to travel by modern science, is still rampant on well-nigh every Continental frontier. In the cases of England and Russia, countries sometime threatened with dynamite outrage by the respective agents of Fenianism and Nihilism, there has been of late years some excuse for the infliction of petty annoyances upon harmless tourists by the exhaustive overhauling and minute inspection of their personal effects. The majority of European realms, however—fortunately for them—are free from the apprehension that any foreigner claiming admission within their territorial limits, in virtue of a railway or steamboat ticket and a passport “en règle,” may be one of those remorseless miscreants who, in the immortal words of an inspired parish clerk, “continually conspire To blow up King and Parliament With gunny-powdy-ire,” or some other even more vehement explosive. What have France, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Spain, for instance, to fear from the stranger without their gates, be he the wealthiest of “globe-trotters” or the poorest of “cheap-trippers,” that they should vex and harass him by

rummaging in his portmanteaux, prying into his hat-box, eviscerating his hand-bag, and strewing his portable property about on grimy boards with monkey-like wilfulness ?

To the experienced excursionist the vernal season is the pleasantest time of the year for the pursuit of his favourite recreation. During the month of May he can avail himself of a felicitous climatic compromise between the chill blasts of spring and the fierce heats of summer. In Southern Europe the breezes are balmy with the scent of flowers, the sun's rays distribute a kindly warmth by day, the skies are blue, the nights are refreshingly cool, and the mosquitoes are as yet unhatched. Every prospect pleases ; only the Custom Houses are vile. Anachronistic as it may appear, the fact is indisputable that the lovelier the land and the more sympathetic its inhabitants, the more oppressive and vexatorial are its regulations for the examination of luggage. Of all Continental countries probably the most picturesque and interesting, from many points of view, are Italy and Spain. Nature and art alike have lavished upon them exceptional attractions, which annually prove irresistible to thousands of pleasure-seekers belonging to the upper middle class of European and Transatlantic society. Their peoples are naturally more suave of disposition and courteous in manner than those of Northern origin, and display for the most part an eager desire to make themselves agreeable to the foreign visitors who contribute in no small measure to the increment of their material well-being. Yet, strange to say, the constituted authorities of these delightful countries systematically beset their approaches with

obstacles of a peculiarly irksome character, and do their "level worst" to stem the beneficial influx of alien gold which is so welcome to Italian and Spanish industrials, traders, and purveyors of creature comforts, when it pours freely into their pockets from "foreign parts."

It is more particularly from Italy that bitter complaints continually reach this country with relation to the persecution of travelling English folk by Custom House officials. That these complaints should be well-founded, as they unquestionably are, and should emanate from Englishmen well known in this country for their cosmopolitan habits and sympathies, is especially to be deplored at a time when the sincere friendship that has so long subsisted between the Italian and British nations has, politically speaking, entered an exceptionally cordial phase. There is, of course, no reason to believe that the Customs regulations enforced at the frontiers of Italy are applied more rigorously or offensively to our fellow-countrymen than to tourists of any other nationality; but their enforcement upon anybody is a matter of grave reproach to so highly civilised, polite, and hospitable a people as the Italians.

The account forwarded to *The Daily Telegraph* by Mr. Edmund Yates of the treatment last year accorded to his luggage by the Turin Dogana, though written with admirable good-humour, was in itself a scathing indictment of the system that subjects inoffensive travellers to wanton worry and aggravating annoyance. At the Custom House of the ancient

Piedmontese capital, formerly renowned for its “gentilezza” towards foreigners, the writer, to quote his own words, was the victim of such a rigorous search as, in forty years’ experience of Continental travel, he had theretofore never seen equalled. All his boxes were opened, and their contents pawed and rumpled, torn and crushed, thrown here and there, and poked into with dirty fingers. The “officiating gentlemen were particularly hurt” that the traveller should have presumed to carry his boots about in canvas bags, and insisted upon taking out each one separately, in order to submit its sole to sedulous and protracted examination. Adding injury to insult, the doganieri, after making hay of his raiment and toilette accessories, levied upon him an impost of five lire for “common mercerizes”—in all probability, clean shirts and socks, British profusion of which would naturally suggest smuggling propensities in their owner to the frugal mind of an Italian Custom House officer—and two and a half lire for “lana frettinata,” an excisable substance which, translated into the vernacular, revealed itself to English apprehensions as “two little balls of wool for knitting purposes.” With a subtle refinement of malignity they then compelled Mr. Yates to pay a further sum of ten centesimi for the stamp affixed to the receipt tendered to him for the amount of his “direct contribution” to the Italian Exchequer. From first to last this “twopenny inquisition,” as its victim aptly designated it, was carried out with a brutal peremptoriness and cynical disregard for the feelings of the

traveller on Italian soil far worthier of the irregular industrials who take toll from unwary tourists in Calabria or Sicily than of the salaried and uniformed officials of a Government entrusted by a free and enlightened people with the administration of their country's affairs.

Still more flagrant was the wrong suffered by another English gentleman at the hands of the Customs authorities in Brindisi. Some five weeks before his arrival at that port, he had landed in Naples, and, being in possession of a certain number of cigarettes for his own use while travelling, very properly "declared" them at the local Dogana, which promptly mulcted him in one hundred per cent. of their original cost. From Naples he journeyed by rail to Venice, and thence, on board the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steam packet *Nizam* to Brindisi, where—although the *Nizam* hailed last from an Italian port—a minute search for excisable articles was instituted into her passengers' luggage. By that time his stock of cigarettes had been reduced to one-half of its primary bulk. He produced the remainder, however, for official inspection, as well as the receipt granted to him by the Naples Custom House for the duty he had there paid upon the total quantity of the self-same cigarettes. Forthwith the Dogana of Brindisi claimed the full amount of duty upon the remnant in question, on the surprising pretext that, as the owner of the cigarettes had smoked some of them during his sojourn in the Peninsula, the Brundusian officials were unable to identify the original number taxed by their Neapolitan colleagues.

Duty was also levied upon some Venetian glass, a distinct product of Italian industry, and was charged upon an old opera-hat belonging to another of the *Nizam's* passengers, who, being a humorous person, took occasion to present the Custom House authorities with his superannuated “gibus” as an enduring souvenir of his brief visit to their classic city. There is, happily, a comic side to these frontier persecutions, which would otherwise be intolerably irritating; but Custom House jokes of this sort are invariably perpetrated at the expense of the traveller, who may therefore be excused for now and then failing to appreciate the fun of that particular variety of jest. Wagging, indeed, that costs money, time, and loss of temper to the person upon whom it is practised is at its best but a one-sided sort of jocularity, seldom productive of pure and unadulterated enjoyment to all parties concerned in it. This class of humour has begun to pall upon travelling Englishmen, who spend their money freely in Continental countries—in none more lavishly than in Italy—who are by no means addicted to petty smuggling, and who have every right, as law-abiding visitors to foreign lands, to be guaranteed by the authorities of those realms against superfluous annoyance and unnecessary humiliation. Mr. Edmund Yates pleasantly described the Italians as “an intelligent, light-hearted people,” but observed that they resemble certain savages, in the respect that “their Customs are beastly.” At any rate, they are Customs “more honoured in the breach than the observance,” and the Italian Government would do well to “reform them altogether.”

## AN IREFUL GUILD.

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THERE are certain useful professions, in themselves as harmless and necessary as the domestic cat itself, the practice of which is apt to generate abnormal irritability in the breasts of those who exercise them—a circumstance the more to be regretted as they are most commonly pursued by members of the softer sex. Conspicuous amongst these exciting callings are the preparation of viands for human consumption, the retail sale of fish, and the washing of household and sumptuary linen. Unruffled temper is as rare a characteristic of washerwomen as meekness is of cooks, or placidity of Billingsgate matrons. All these three varieties of industrials resemble poets, in the respect that they belong to an “irritable genus.” Throughout the world cooks enjoy the reputation of being hasty, impetuous, and prone to ire. The elderly ladies who squat, surrounded by fish-pails and in the receipt of custom, on the Schillerplatz in Berlin are known and feared as the angriest of their sex; and their command of vituperative language is only equalled by that attributed to the Parisian *lavandière* by competent authorities—amongst others M. Émile Zola, who has

immortalised her powers of invective in a memorable episode of his startling realistic novel, "L'Assommoir."

Not long ago a Parisian *chronique du jour* furnished an apt illustration of the extent to which Lutetian washerwomen "let their angry passions rise" when they conceive that any slight, real or imaginary, has been put upon them by those with whom their professional avocations bring them into frequent and immediate contact. A peripatetic potman of the Rue Rochechouart, part of whose daily functions it was to minister to the thirst of the *lavandières* plying their craft in that locality, having been so ill-advised or unfortunate as to give umbrage to his customers, was in the act of supplying them with their accustomed beverages one morning, when he suddenly found himself seized by a dozen pairs of vigorous arms. In the twinkling of an eye he was denuded of his garments, and, whilst some of his formidable clients held him tightly in their inflexible grip, others souused him with the contents of bucket after bucket of cold soapsuds and water. This depressing process was continued without intermission throughout a quarter of an hour by the washhouse clock, at the expiration of which period the dripping potman was permitted to dry himself and resume possession of his clothes. Immediately after effecting his escape from the scene of his sufferings he betook himself to the nearest police office, and there poured out his tale of woe to the authorities. These latter, however, emulated the action of his tormentors, from a figurative point of view, by throwing cold water upon his grievance. As a matter of fact, instead of

offering him the expression of official sympathy, or holding out to him a pleasing prospect of legal remedy for his wrongs, they severely advised him to treat washerwomen with more civility and deference for the future than in the past, and sent him about his business. Thus the shivering and humiliated potman, having obtained no satisfaction whatsoever, was compelled to return to his pots with a deep sense of discomfiture and defeat, having taken nothing by his appeal to justice save an intimation to the effect that washerwomen, in the greatest of Continental cities, are privileged persons, whom it is highly expedient not to offend, and with whom the Parisian police is far too wise to meddle, even when it pleases them to strip a French *citoyen* against his will, and half drown him in a torrent of diluted suds.

It is a curious fact that whilst washerwomen—in this country—are for the most part surrounded by obscurity, and seldom attract public notice, either in their professional or social capacity, they occupy a position of some prominence abroad, and not infrequently achieve considerable conspicuity in the leading foreign capitals. In Paris, for instance, the *lavandières* or *lavandeuses* figure splendidly in festive processions at least once a year, during the open-air celebrations of Mid-Lent, their gorgeous car and its comely occupants constituting a far more attractive feature of the *Bœuf Gras* cortège than that of the fatted ox himself, although he unquestionably ranks as the hero of the show. In Vienna, too, the *Waescherinnen*—who chiefly congregate in the *Lerchenfeld* suburb, an

outlying district of the Kaiserstadt, and many of whom are women of extraordinary beauty as well of exceptional muscular strength—give two or three grand balls every winter, which are always assiduously attended by the Austrian *jeunesse dorée* and by foreigners of distinction temporarily abiding in the gayest of Danube cities. These balls are conducted with the utmost propriety; no matron or maiden outside the washing-guild is admitted to them, and they are nevertheless renowned for finer displays of statuesque charm and tasteful toilettes than are to be seen at any other dancing entertainments of the Vienna hyernal season. Berlin has its annual Waschfrau ball, a singularly lively festivity held at one of the great dancing-halls during Carnival time; and so have Munich, Dresden, Hamburg, and several other important provincial cities of the Fatherland. The washer-women of Northern Germany, like those indigenous to British soil, are by no means so celebrated for good looks as are their Viennese colleagues. They are, however, well skilled in the practice of their calling; and their tariff of charges, by comparison with that obtaining amongst the higher flights of French *lavandières*, is distinguished for its moderation. In none of the great Berlin hotels, for instance—and no European city can boast of more magnificent and luxurious establishments for the accommodation of travellers than several of the new *Gasthaeuser* recently erected on the banks of the Spree—does a lady run the least risk of being charged more than a mark—the German equivalent of a shilling—for the washing

of a nightdress ; whereas the sum of seven francs, or five shillings and tenpence of English currency, is known to have been demanded in a leading Parisian hotel for the same feat in more than one case. The washing and getting-up of fine linen in France, indeed, is a luxury extremely costly to those who indulge in it, and correspondingly remunerative to the washerwomen's guild.

London washerwomen labour under serious disadvantages, as far as the drying and obtention of pure whiteness in the articles confided to their manipulation are concerned, resulting from the constant presence of soot in the atmosphere peculiar to this metropolis. To avoid the dire consequences of spreading out "clothes" to dry in back-yards, or upon "leads" and house-roofs in populous neighbourhoods, they are compelled to have recourse to artificial heat, which leaves nothing to be desired as a siccator, but lacks the bleaching properties of sun and wind. Drying linen in hot air or before a coal fire imparts to it a dull, yellowish hue which, however unimportant in connection with sheets and pillow-cases, is a decided drawback to the aspect of shirt-fronts, table-cloths, and dinner-napkins, all of which, to be thoroughly effective, should be white as the driven snow. The benefits heretofore conferred by science upon the laundress-craft appear to us to be of a questionable nature. It is doubtful whether steam-washing, mechanical mangling, and hot-air drying preserve the durability of linen, and improve its colour. The chemical infusions in which our shirts and pocket-handkerchiefs

are steeped, not only by limited liability institutions, but too frequently by our trusted private washerwomen, undermine the constitutions of collars and sever the vital threads of buttons. Huge wooden stamps driven by inexorable machinery belabour fine linen every whit as furiously and destructively as do the flat clubs wielded with such unstinted force on river-banks innumerable by Italian *lavandaje* and Spanish *lavanderas*.

A sad story is told of a wealthy gentleman, notorious for the spotlessness and faultless "get-up" of his body-linen, whose privilege it was to be numbered among the acquaintance of two illustrious ladies of fashion, associated in the "promotion" of a steam laundry organised upon a scale of unprecedented magnitude, and fitted with all the most ingenious appliances devised by modern science. As soon as this establishment was fairly launched, the ladies in question undertook its management and direction, and besought all their male friends, in winning accents, to patronise it. The legislator, editor, and humourist to whom I allude withstood their blandishments with admirable steadfastness for some time, being deeply attached to his linen, every inch of which was the finest quality purchasable for money; and reposing, moreover, implicit confidence in the talent of a venerable washerwoman, who had served him faithfully from his boyhood's sunny hour to the ripeness of his middle age. At length, however, worn out by the persistent importunity of his fair solicitresses, he consented, in a moment of weakness, to entrust a dozen of his dress shirts to their care, with the express understanding

that they—the shirts—should be dealt with *secundum artem* by the brand-new washing institution. Time rolled on. Some weeks after he had parted with his cherished shirts they were returned to him, coffee-coloured, riddled with innumerable tiny holes, the edges of their cuffs and plastrons sorely frayed, and as buttonless as so many fried soles. I need scarcely add that the victim of science instantly reverted to the simple human agencies of his aged family laundress, and that he has been deservedly happy ever since.

According to geologists, physiologists, and chronologists, there have been ever so many Ages in the history of our little world. The Plutonic, Diluvian, Tertiary; the Ages of Stone, Bronze, Iron; the Golden, Dark, and Middle Ages; the Ages of Chivalry and Romance; the Elizabethan and Victorian Ages, and a dozen other more or less generalising secular definitions, bring us down to present times, which have been variously epithetised as the Age of Coal, of Steam, of Electricity, and, perhaps most aptly of all, as the Advertising Age. It seems to me that as good a title as any for the epoch of competition and high pressure in which we are actually living would be the Co-operative Age. Well-nigh everybody co-operates nowadays, from the Civil Servants of the Crown, who are gentlemen, as the saying goes, by Act of Parliament, down to such unpretending, laborious proletarians as “stone-setters” and “file-grinders.”

In more than one of his powerful “novels with a purpose,” the late Charles Reade pointed out that the only device really worth adopting by every earnest

contemporary man and woman was “*Soyons de notre siècle!*” There is abundant evidence that his timely counsel has been taken to heart by our upper social classes, at least; for ladies of high degree make no secret, or a transparent one, of their active business connection with dressmaking establishments or bonnet shops, and sprigs of nobility are only too glad to figure as partners in respectable stockbroking firms or wine merchants’ houses. “Corners” in all sorts of commodities—an institution imported into this country of late years from the United States—are the outcome of co-operative enterprise. Wealthy and shrewd men join their pecuniary forces and commercial influences together to buy up all the salt, or coal, or nitrate in creation, and to make a “good thing” out of it. Syndicates rule the roost, or rather the markets, in every great centre of trade and finance. In Paris they are even credited with “running” candidates for the Chamber, and “carrying” political elections.

The French capital is particularly well off in the matter of syndicates, and has at a comparatively recent date been further enriched by a remarkable addition to its stock of that class of association. Only last year ten thousand “fully qualified and duly accredited” Lutetian washerwomen agreed to form themselves into a syndicate for the purpose of looking after their professional interests “in an official manner.” At a meeting held by these laundresses it was resolved that they should establish a Bourse or business rendezvous of their own, to which they might repair in order to be hired for work, and to make their own terms with employers,

after the manner of artisans and labourers at the Bourse du Travail. Over this mighty concourse of *lavandières* and *blanchisseuses* presided a washerwoman of renown, who addressed the assembly with the eloquent persuasiveness of a practised debater. At her instance the rate of remuneration per diem to be exacted by members of the association was fixed at about the equivalent of three shillings in French currency. The "Council of Administration," it was decided, was to consist of "six washerwomen of irreproachable morals." Politics were to be rigorously tabooed from all discussions held by the syndicate *in corpore*; but balls and concerts were to be organised in plenty, their proceeds being affected to the formation of an assistance fund.

Ten thousand Parisian washerwomen, and in perfect agreement! Such an announcement was indeed amazing, almost past the bounds of belief; for laundresses are notoriously prone to "let their angry passions rise" upon slight provocation. According to M. Zola, the French *blanchisseuse* knows no rival in her command of florid invective, and of "language" which is "painful and frequent and free." It was after having made a careful study from the life of her "tricks and manners," that the author of "L'Assommoir" drew a graphic picture of an encounter between the ireful practitioners in soap and water, which was impressively reproduced upon the English stage, and constituted one of the chief attractions of a powerful and popular melodrama. That ten thousand members of so short-tempered a profession should have gathered together in unity and

concord, submitted themselves to the temporary guidance of an orator of their own sex, and adopted her suggestions with sweet unanimity and lamb-like meekness, was indeed one of the most astonishing incidents of a period of French history almost oppressively rife with surprises. In a session of Parisian laundresses one would have expected the authority of the chairwoman to be disputed whenever any attempt was made to assert it. Any number of motions and counter-motions, amendments, and "interpellations" might have been confidently looked for during a washerwomen's debate; in short, any and every variety of parliamentary procedure except a vote of confidence in the president of the assembly, which, however, was the practical result of the meeting to which I refer. Unlike their legislating fellow-countrymen in the Chamber, the Parisian *blanchisseuses* appear not to have indulged themselves in "exchanges of defiance," storms of groans and hisses, or even "murmurs of disapprobation," but to have listened patiently to the propositions put to them from the Chair, to have voted like one washerwoman in favour of the motions "on the paper," and in every respect to have conducted themselves with exemplary decorum and self-control throughout proceedings in which every one of them must have taken a keen and lively personal interest.

For centuries past the *lavandières* of the French capital have been much more "to the front" than the sisters of their craft in this metropolis. As a rule, London washerwomen do a great deal of useful work, so to speak, by stealth, but would assuredly "blush to

find it fame." On the Continent, however, the laundress is a personage of no small moment, nor is she by any means averse to conspicuity in connection with her amusements as well as her avocations. As I have already mentioned, the *dames du lavoir* are the real attraction of the *Boeuf Gras* cortège. To the nominal hero of the celebration few of its spectators give a second thought. After his brief tour through the principal thoroughfares he is led away to the *abattoir*, there to be converted into beef by the usual lethal process; whereas the gay group of laundresses who have conferred distinction upon his apotheosis are transported to a scene of feasting and revelry, in which they disport themselves all night long, and far into the morning. It may be said with truth that the washerwomen of every European country except England are eminently festive. To those of Paris belongs the honour of having taken the initiative in constituting a co-operative association for the safeguarding of the great washing interest.

## TATTER-BOOKS.

A "DRESS ALBUM," the latest suggestion of feminine ingenuity, is an absolute novelty, and one that can scarcely fail to exercise a subtle and enduring fascination upon the ornate sex. It is to take the form of a book, upon the leaves of which samples of every dress worn by its owner will be gummed, after the manner of the specimen trouser or waistcoat stuffs displayed on a tailor's pattern-card. Chronological order will be strictly observed in the arrangement of these cuttings. Under each shred of silk or scrap of stuff will be inscribed the date at which the dress from which it has been shorn was first sent home to, or worn by, the compiler of the collection. Leaders of fashion will doubtless have need of a separate volume for each successive season, whereas a single tome will probably suffice to contain the *chronique d'échantillons* of a whole lifetime in the case of a "Dress Album" owner belonging to the humbler walks of existence. Collectionising, as it may be called, is an almost exclusively human passion or fancy, facilitated and even stimulated of late years, as far as its practical expression is concerned, by the multifarious developments imparted to the album. I say "almost exclusively human"

advisedly, because certain families of monkeys, and at least two varieties of the corvine species of bird, are inveterate "snappers-up of unconsidered trifles."

All lovers of Italian Opera are familiar with the unprincipled magpie, whose irrepressible tendency to annex small but valuable articles of jewellery and plate led to a grave misprision of justice, and all but caused the premature decease of an innocent village maiden. Ravens have ere now earned infe citous distinction as persistent collectors of silver spoons; and "Grip," beloved of and immortalised by Charles Dickens, took a keen and inexhaustible delight in burying stolen halfpence and metal buttons in symmetrical rows within the precincts of the great novelist's stable-yard. Some dogs, too, are unalterably addicted to the interment of bones—preferentially at the roots of rare shrubs or in beds of costly flowers—not, however, for the purpose of handing them down to posterity as choice illustrations of comparative anatomy, but with a view to digging them up now and anon, at uncanonical hours, in order to indulge in spell after spell of leisurely and luxurious gnawing.

Still, neither the "Gazza Ladra" nor "Old Dog Tray" himself can rival man as a systematic, assiduous, and indefatigable collector of *curiosa*, or even of commonplace things; and it cannot be denied that albums are nowadays instrumental to no inconsiderable extent in fostering this particular human proclivity. The word album originally denoted a white or "blank" surface, convenient for the setting down of drawings, verses, apophthegms, improvised moral sentiments, "elegant

extracts," and other waifs and strays of art and literature deemed worth remembering or keeping. Albums were near akin to scrap books; to fill them with original or memorised rubbish the friends and acquaintances of their young lady proprietors were mercilessly laid under contribution. Now, for the most part, they are become repositories of photographs, autographs, postage stamps, crests, mottoes, Christmas cards, and decorative *menus*. In filling volumes upon volumes with "ana" of this class the harmless collecting mania has found vent for some years past, and will doubtless welcome with enthusiasm the discovery of a fresh outlet for its superabundant energies in the shape of a "Dress Album."

There is something decidedly attractive and interesting in the notion of a continuous, unbroken record of female attire from the cradle to the grave. Such a collection of specimen stuffs would necessarily constitute a complete series of infallible reminders of all the chief events in a woman's career; of her christening, her emancipation from the weighty restraint of long clothes to the toddling freedom of short frocks, her confirmation, betrothal, and marriage; of her presentation at Court, her social triumphs in ball-room and banqueting hall; perhaps, even, of her widowhood. Turning over the leaves of her "Dress Album," she would find in its every page some silent but sure prompter to her memory; here a scrap of the spotted cotton frock in which, when a prim little girl, she used to "do" her translations and practise her scales under the strict supervision of Miss MacSomething, the daily governess;

a little further on, a snipping, striped and shiny, of her first silk dress, only to be worn at church or when accompanying mamma, by special favour, on a round of afternoon visits, or for a drive in the Park. Not far from this memento of girlhood's earliest dignities and responsibilities, a shred of dark cloth reminds her of the pretty riding-habit which she had to be measured for by a fashionable tailor when papa bought her the long-promised pony, reward of patient assiduity in the school-room, and object of her fond worship for many a happy month. This morsel of muslin, yellow with age, was cut from the very piece that furnished her with a gown, worn in all its rustling freshness on "breaking-up day," and arrayed in which, with a blue or pink silk sash—she cannot remember which—she took first prizes for French, singing, and elocution, to the pride and delight of her loving parents, long since dead. She had a serge dress on, duly represented in the album by a tatter, when—while holiday-making at the seaside—she met her first love, a bright-eyed, curly-wigged schoolboy of twelve, with whom, ere she had known him a week, she exchanged sweet and sticky pledges of an affection that ought to have been eternal—such, at the time, was the settled resolve of both participants in it—but somehow or other failed to outlast that particular summer. A page or two further on are fragments of a travelling dress, made up on the occasion of her first trip to the Continent, the year before she had regularly "come out"; of a virginal ball-dress, in all the white glory of which she made her *début* as a "grown-up" young lady in the shabby old Assembly-room of the county town, and danced four waltzes and a galop with a soul-

subduing captain of Hussars, whose name she has totally forgotten. And so on, through the patchwork rows and columns recalling memories of picnics and garden parties, races and cricket matches, flower shows and regattas, each with its incidental or episodical flirtation ; of tender courtships and broken-off engagements ; of the final “coup de foudre” and its happy or miserable issue ; in short, of all the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, fulfilments and disappointments that make up the “strange, eventful story” of a woman’s life.

The fact that it is woman’s recognised privilege—not shared, oddly enough, or rarely so, by females of the lower orders of animate creatures—to be far more attractive, outwardly considered, than man, in virtue of ornamental raiment as well as of physical beauty, imparts a charm to the chronicle of her apparel that would be vainly sought by either sex in a similar record of male attire. Very few men—even in the springtide of their existence, when, as the Poet Laureate has assured us, “a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love”—take that intense and absorbing interest in their garments which is, perhaps, the most universal of feminine characteristics. The clothes, too, worn nowadays by the sterner sex, in this country at least, are for the most part subdued in colour and unassuming in design, presenting few, if any, specialities of hue or pattern sufficiently distinctive to jog the memory of their wearers after a long lapse of years. One pair of trousers is well-nigh as like to another as the two little niggers—Cæsar and Pompey—of whom their sable sire complacently remarked that they were “berry much alike—’specially Pompey.” In the even-

ing, when ladies dazzle us with the glitter of their jewels and the polychromatic splendour of their costumes, men are clad in sober suits of funereal black, the dismalness of which is only relieved, as a rule, by a snowy "plastron" and necktie, here and there by the stiffly starched surface of a white waistcoat. Samples of old dress-coats pasted in a book would carry but little significance, even if accurately dated, to the mind of an average English gentleman. Old army and navy men, courtiers, and diplomatists, might be pleasantly reminded of their salad-days by the contemplation of a scrap or two of old scarlet or blue cloth, remnants of their first uniforms or official costumes. It is conceivable that a venerable judge should gaze with fond retrospection upon a tatter of the stuff gown, robed in which he made his first appearance in Court as a briefless, but robust and hopeful barrister ; or upon a textile reminder of the day upon which he "took silk" and passed within the Bar at the invitation of the Bench. A bishop, too, might like to look upon a shred of the surplice he wore when a poor curate, or a mere holder of "Deacon's orders," eagerly awaiting employment and a salary. On the whole, however, men of middle age take but little stock in their *vestiaires* of the past ; whereas a woman, be she as old as Methusaleh's grandmother, rarely loses that lively interest in her dress, retrospective, present, and prospective, that prompts her throughout life to set off her natural charms to the best advantage by tasteful toilettes, to a great extent for her own gratification, truly—but a thousand times more so for that of her male friends and acquaintances.

## A KINDLY FOLK.

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To persons who delight in frivolous amusements London must appear the dullest of European capitals. It abounds in recreations eminently suited to the tastes of highly educated and cultivated people, such as picture galleries, art and science museums, and industrial exhibitions, but is forlorn of fairs and destitute even of street shows. Human nature is so curiously constituted that there are thousands upon thousands who would contemplate the "Madonna della Sedia" of Raffaelle with stolid indifference, while they would gaze with rapturous interest on a seven-headed calf or a brace of Siamese Twins. The charms of a Mesopotamian notarial tablet, or even of the Elgin marbles themselves, leave unmoved many an honest Englishman who would gloat upon the grim attractions of a Living Skeleton or a Bearded Lady. For such unsophisticated lovers of the extra-natural and the grotesque this metropolis is, at its best, but a tame and unsatisfactory place of sojourn. They may search in vain within the precincts of the four-mile radius for a spot on which the Pig-faced Matron has been permitted to pitch her tent, or where the scaly Man-fish has received parochial authori-

sation to wallow luxuriously in a glass tank. Within the memory of middle-aged Londoners all such quaint and diverting sights have been sternly banished from the open spaces of the British capital, from its suburban greens, and from its neighbouring commons and race-courses. At Chalk Farm and Greenwich Fairs, barely forty years ago, every sort of pastime, from Richardsonian tragedy to thimblerig, and from the wondrous Ramtifoozum and Amri-Omri of the travelling menagerie down to the simple but fascinating cock-shy, could be indulged in for an almost nominal pecuniary outlay ; but these to cockney holiday-makers of the present generation are become the mere shadow of a name.

The rulers of modern London, unlike those of ancient Rome, do not deem it needful to propitiate the people they govern by providing them with "bread and games." Political economy, in its wisdom, ordains that the former shall be laboriously earned, and that the latter shall be dispensed with altogether by those who most urgently require them. A different spirit animates the view of popular amusements taken by the ædiles of Paris. Not only do they tolerate street fairs, on certain fixed anniversaries, in the main arteries of Parisian traffic, but they sanction the holding, well-nigh all the year round, of cheap open-air entertainments, in more than one of the densely populated faubourgs that environ the Cité, Isle de France, and fashionable as well as business *quartiers* of central Lutetia. Of the suburban resorts to which uncounted Parisian *bourgeois* and *ouvriers* flock every Sunday and fête-day,

attracted by the lavish display of monstrosities, athletic feats, peep-shows, and mechanical contrivances there awaiting their patronage, the Buttes de Montmartre ranks first and foremost. For more than fifty years past—under Monarchy, Empire, and Republic alike—Montmartre has been the chief Parisian gathering-place of *al-fresco* showmen, and the favourite haunt of those easy-going Sabbatarians who, like the late Thomas Hood, “cannot think that ‘tis a deadly sin, Unless he’s loose, to look upon a lion,” and are of opinion that “Bruin’s no worse than bakin’ on a Sunday.”

There are few truer proverbs than that which alleges that “one half of mankind knows not how the other half lives.” The commonwealth of mountebanks, upon which so many millions of our fellow-men in all parts of the world are dependent for recreation suitable alike to their tastes and their means, pregnantly illustrates the veracity of this time-honoured axiom. Of any ten average Englishmen engaged in the pursuit of commerce, or of the liberal professions—or, let us say, tradesmen, mechanics, and agricultural labourers—how many are possessed of any accurate information with respect to the training, habits, gains, and every-day surroundings of the humble, hard-working “artists” who provide the poorer classes of our population with rough-and-ready entertainments, wandering about the country from village to village in the finer months of the year, and here and there picking up a few stray pence with which, as a rule, they contrive to pay their way, doing no wrong, and asking no man’s charity—for

do they not give a full equivalent, in the shape of amusement, for paltry fees often collected with great labour and difficulty? Were it not that some of the most popular novelists of this century have graphically sketched for us the manners and customs, sayings and doings, of the genus *saltimbanque*, we should, as a nation, be absolutely ignorant of the salient characteristics of the showman, the circus-rider, the acrobat, the stilt-dancer, and the Punch and Judy performers.

To Charles Dickens, who delighted in itinerant shows and their *dramatis personæ*, human or mechanical, we owe our knowledge of the circumstance that infirm giants are generally told off to attend upon robust dwarfs, and our acquaintance with many other curious secrets of the mountebank guild. Charles Lever told us, many years ago, the delightful story of the terrific savage, professedly hailing from the Cannibal Islands and enjoying a Continental reputation for his unappeasable appetite in the matter of live rabbits and pigeons, whose wild vociferations, claiming to be uttered in some strange South Pacific dialect, revealed him to a chance compatriot as a native of Tipperary. Eugène Sue, in two of his most powerful romances, "The Wandering Jew" and "Martin the Foundling," has thrown a vivid, if somewhat lurid, light upon the practices that formerly obtained in circuses and travelling menageries, in connection with the training of equestrians, acrobats, and lion-kings. From Victor Hugo we have learned the horrible details of the process by which the barbarous comprachicos were wont to manufacture

“freaks of nature” out of well-grown children; whilst Wilkie Collins and Paul de Kock, as well as the immortal author of “The Old Curiosity Shop” and “Hard Times,” have shown us the kindlier, more genial side of the street-performer’s character. Not one of these masters of fiction, however, has furnished us with a more sympathetic example of the tender-heartedness that so often signalises the much-despised mountebank than was afforded by the obsequies of Mademoiselle de Beaufort, the Pearl of Montmartre.

On a bright summer day of the year 1888, joyous Montmartre was the scene of a ceremony no less strange of aspect than touching in character. Mademoiselle de Beaufort, a beautiful young girl, who had lived her brief life in the very heart of the mountebank corporation, to which she had endeared herself by innumerable acts of gentle womanly kindness, had died of consumption, and had been “waked” in the establishment of her parents, the proprietors of a huge perambulating peep-show installed at the fair in the “people’s borough” of Paris. She was described as having been the joy of her father and mother, and as having been known to all the eccentric industrials among whom she had sojourned since her earliest childhood as the “Pearl,” not only by reason of her stainless conduct, but because she had invariably displayed the most tender sympathy and generous helpfulness for unfortunate *saltimbanques* plunged into temporary destitution by mishap, failing health, or hard times. It appears that whenever the parental peep-show was doing good business the “Pearl” persuaded its owners to allow her a small percentage on

its profits. The sums thus placed at her disposal she applied to the relief of "poverty-stricken infant phenomena, giants out of work, and pygmies who happened to be down on their luck for the time being." The grateful mountebanks upon whom this merciful maiden had showered timely benefits in life mourned her sincerely and lovingly in death. They covered her coffin with evergreen garlands and wreaths of fresh flowers as it lay within the show, awaiting interment, and they reverently followed the remains of their fair young benefactress to the grave.

So fantastic and yet pathetic a funeral cortège as that of Mademoiselle de Beaufort has rarely been seen passing through the streets of a great European city. The sable draperies of the hearse were all but concealed from view by a profusion of floral tributes, and behind the "Pearl's" sorrow-stricken parents walked all the leading notorietyies of the Montmartre Fair. There might be seen, arrayed in the conventional garb of woe, lion-tamers of world-wide renown, the fattest of women and the thinnest of men, the tallest of giants and minutest of dwarfs; sinewy acrobats, brawny weight-lifters, deft jugglers, stately serpent-queens, circus clowns and riders, owners of shooting-galleries and *carrousels*, negroes, Moors, Albinoes, and many other specimens of the quaint beings that constitute one of the lowest strata of cosmopolitan Bohemians, all linked together for the nonce by the common bonds of heartfelt gratitude and loving-kindness. Few of the great ones of this earth, as they travel in solemn pomp to their last abode, are attended by so truly heavy-hearted

a following as that which formed the funereal escort of the mountebanks' "Pearl." In her case, the flowers that decked Death's chariot were, for once in a way, genuinely typical of unfeigned attachment and enduring regret; for they were purchased, at the cost of who can tell what sacrifices and privations, by "poor players," whose slender earnings—the fruit of heavy physical labour, frequently involving daily risk of life—too often barely suffice them to keep the wolf from the door.

## MURAL TABLETS.

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SOME months ago the Fine Arts Committee of the Paris Municipality was unexpectedly stricken by a commemorative craze, prompting it to jog the memory of its fellow-citizens with respect to the incidents of historical interest in which their forefathers were more or less correctly reported to have taken part. Persons and events of the past, authentically identified with memorable revolutions, local risings, and sieges "of a popular character," were to be particularly commemorated. Shortly after the adoption of this project an eruption of mural tablets broke out all over the French capital, and now he who lounges, rather than he who runs, is enabled to read the history of Lutetia epitomised upon its walls. A list has been published of the buildings upon which these "abstract and brief chronicles" are recorded. The entablatures signalise events that occurred a thousand years ago, as well as those which have taken place within the memory of living man.

Although the Municipality of Paris itself is nothing if not ultra-democratic, its Fine Arts Committee displayed considerable catholicity of feeling in its selection of the personages whose names it deemed worthy of immortalisation. Partisans of Monarchical

institutions were by no means excluded from participation in the posthumous honours conferred upon illustrious Frenchmen and Frenchwomen by a Republican Corporation. Memorial plaques have been incrusted in the walls of the houses formerly inhabited by Châteaubriand, André Chenier, and Madame de Sévigné. The martyrdom of a Protestant hero, the venerable Admiral de Coligny, is commemorated by a tablet indicating the exact spot upon which he was assassinated during the hideous Massacre of St. Bartholomew, in the year 1572. A similar tribute has been paid to the memory of Théophraste Renaudin, the first printer who, sixty years later, published a newspaper in Paris, near the *Nouveau Marché*, and to the names of the two greatest of French humourists, Rabelais and Molière.

The names and incidents, indeed, chosen for mural commemoration were so numerous that when the Municipality's scheme shall have been fully carried out Paris will be studded in every direction with marble or metal reminders of its past glories. A good many of the plaques have already been set up in their respective places, not invariably to the unmitigated satisfaction of the householders at present occupying the tenements adorned by these memorials. Quite recently a respectable tradesman, anti-Republican to the backbone, protested vehemently against the insertion in his house-front of a tablet recording the patriotic virtues of Danton, but was compelled to yield to the pressure exercised upon him by the municipal authorities. Another shopkeeper, who must have been curiously free from the naïve sentimentality generally charac-

terising the French *bourgeoisie*, sternly warned the agents of the Fine Arts Committee that if they should affix a plaque to the memory of Bernardin St. Pierre, the author of "Paul and Virginia," to the wall of his dwelling in the Rue de Bellechasse, he would assuredly deface it. This barbarous threat could only have emanated from a bosom steeled against the charms of "goody-goody" literature, and cynically unsympathetic to the woes of unsophisticated love. It may be hoped that such instances of hardened intolerance are few and far between in the lively city that bids fair to rival Mesopotamia in the matter of historical tablets. Very probably it might mortify a confirmed Home Ruler to see a terra-cotta tile bearing the name of "Balfour" imbedded in the brickwork of his town residence; but private prejudice and political antipathy should not be allowed to interfere with the publicity of interesting data, or with the embellishment of domestic architecture.

Englishmen are so inapt to do reverence, at least, in any plastic form, to the memories of their great fellow-countrymen departed, and the majority of houses in this vast metropolis is of such comparatively modern construction, that the practice of ornamenting private dwellings with tablets commemorating the birth or death of their celebrated tenants in times past has not as yet found favour to any great extent in London. An association of historical enthusiasts exists among us, I believe, which every now and then, at its own costs and charges, puts up a plaque on some old-fashioned house-front in an out-of-the-way street or court, recording the fact that, at such or such a date, an

eminent English author or actor, poet or painter, lived in the tenement thus signalised to public notice. This modest dole of immortality has already been accorded to Byron and Hogarth, Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Siddons, and a few other quondam British celebrities ; but, as I have already observed, it is in every case the outcome of private enterprise. I am not aware that the Corporation of London has recorded the deeds or virtues of any deceased civic dignitary on a mural tablet visible to the naked eye in any City thoroughfare ; indeed, were the leading incidents of London's eventful history to be locally identified in this sort, or were the noteworthy achievements of London citizens to be thus enduringly chronicled upon slabs of stone or plates of brass, there would scarcely be a house within the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor that would be unadorned by some outward and visible sign of the remarkable historical, social, or commercial episodes with which its site might justly claim association.

It has not, until comparatively recent times, however, been "our way," in the modern Babylon, to raise public memorials to the mighty dead. Probably the crop of statues that has sprung up of late in different parts of London is attributable to a somewhat tardy awakening of national consciousness to the effect that we have perhaps been a thought backward in this particular respect. As far as contemporary Englishmen of inborn ability are concerned, it may be said that modern statuary of native origin has not only added to the terrors of Death, but in all likelihood has deterred them from putting forth their whole intellectual strength

or artistic talent, lest they should render themselves liable to the posthumous humiliation that has recently befallen several deceased British military, political, literary, and scientific notables. What would in this country appear to be a national reprobation and punishment of conspicuous individual merit, would, of course, assume a less virulent and vengeful form in the shape of a mural tablet, than in that of a bronze or marble monstrosity. The plaque is unquestionably a milder infliction than the statue—less painful to the living, and less reproachful to the dead. Perhaps this is why it has not hitherto recommended itself to general acceptance in the land which, however indisputable its claim to be “the home of the brave and the free,” cannot with justice vaunt the artistic beauties of its commemorative sculpture.

As, despite our widespread reputation for common sense and practicality, we are really an impulsive and exaggerative people, naturally inclined to carry all our crotchets, from politics to fashions, and from doctrines to sports, to extremes, we may congratulate ourselves, on the whole, that we are as yet unmoved by the passion for mural tablets which appears to have laid hold of the Parisian ædiles with extraordinary force and intensity. Were this commemorative impulse once fairly imparted to London society, there is no knowing to what extravagant lengths it might carry its victims. Metropolitan ratepayers might be stimulated by irrepressible gratitude for splendid services and exemplary disinterestedness to immortalise the Board of Works on innumerable house-fronts. Penny subscriptions might be raised among the poorer classes

to express in some cheap encaustic shape their sense of the benefits conferred upon parent operatives, in the receipt of low wages or temporarily out of work, by the kindly and judicious administration of School Boards. The civic virtues of Common Councilmen would probably receive ample recognition at the hands of their electors, or of one another; vestries would pay mural tribute to the special gifts of distinguished parishioners; parishioners would scorn to be behind-hand in plastic acknowledgment of the devotion to their interests displayed by public-spirited vestrymen.

Within a few years London would become a City of Tablets, a huge aggregation of graven memorials, its every dwelling displaying a claim to national, urban, or parochial consideration on behalf of its past or present occupant. It is with a dispensation, or rather visitation, of this description that Paris has lately been exercised. Perhaps, "taking one consideration with the other," after the philosophical fashion of Mr. Gilbert's typical policeman, London will do wisely to content itself with its present stock of memorials, statuesque and otherwise, increasing the collection from time to time by a harmless necessary tablet, set up in a quiet, unfrequented neighbourhood, just to show that the capital of England is not altogether unmindful of its glorious past and of those who have contributed to its renown "in arms, in arts, in song." With regard to monumental records, be they large or small, conspicuous or retiring, we have not what the French aptly designate as "*la main heureuse*." Let us, therefore, "rather bear those ills we have" in the memorial line "than fly to others that we know not of."

## A PENAL NOVELTY.

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OF late years experiments of great interest in all branches of physical science have succeeded one another with bewildering rapidity. Attempts have been made to annihilate time and space by the aid of steam and electricity ; to utilise wool as a panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to ; to cultivate the sense of smell until it acquires artistic and moral perceptions ; and, finally, to enable mankind to dispense with solid food altogether. Should these ingenious experiments be crowned with success, the Man of the Future will assuredly enjoy several important advantages over his progenitor, the Man of the Present. Clothed from head to foot in woollen fabrics that will ensure him immunity from disease and even indisposition, he can scarcely fail to attain extreme old age ; indeed, there would appear to be no cogent reason why he should not live for ever, inasmuch as his digestive organs will be relieved from the wear-and-tear at present consequent upon their obligation to deal with edibles. He will probably be able to transport himself from place to place, irrespective of distance, by a mere effort of volition ; and his olfactory sense, when all its varied powers shall be

revealed to him, will enable him to choose his friends and business connections by the scents emanating from virtue and integrity, as well as to avoid those misguided persons who reek of vice and dishonesty. Something very closely resembling unadulterated happiness may surely be attainable by human beings who require no food from one year's end to another, and who can smell an affectionate disposition with unerring accuracy, or detect disingenuousness at a single sniff.

Whilst awaiting with hopeful patience the achievement, by my fellow-men and myself, of these highly ameliorated conditions of existence, kind memory reminds me of a novel and surprising experiment made a year or two ago in the sister kingdom by one of Her Majesty's Judges. Two men, named Healy, underwent trial at Tralee for assaulting the police, and, having been found guilty, were sentenced in due course to suffer certain penalties. Subsequently at the quarter sessions, Judge Curran, being called upon to confirm the sentences passed upon these misdemeanants, announced his resolve to "try an experiment." The accused, he observed, had been convicted as ringleaders of a lawless mob; he would, therefore, give them a chance of being ringleaders in a conspiracy to keep the peace. With this end in view he ordered that they should be released on bail for the term of three months, and informed them that, should the district remain free from agrarian crime during that period, they would escape punishment.

Whatever doubts might suggest themselves to the captious professional mind with respect to the legality

of the above remarkable decision, no one could for a moment hesitate to admit that Judge Curran's "experiment" sparkled with genuine Milesian humour, and, moreover, went far to prove the depth and accuracy of his acquaintance with his fellow-countrymen's idiosyncrasies. It appealed at once to the quaint chivalrous side of Pat's complex character, and to his quick perception and relish of a joke. Nothing funnier or more ingenious had been imagined for some time past, even by an Irish Judge, than to turn convicted criminals into hostages for the good conduct of their fellow-miscreants, or to deal with the legal punishment of malefactors as a commodity exchangeable for the tranquillity of a disorderly district.

Possibly this subtle "experiment" may answer in sentimental Erin ; but I doubt the expediency of trying it in our duller and more commonplace island. The day, I sincerely trust, is far distant when an English Judge, required to pass sentence on the typical burglar, will address him in the following terms : "Prisoner at the bar, you have been tried and found guilty by a jury of your countrymen of having burglariously entered the premises of one John Smith, residing in Harley Street, and of having feloniously stolen and carried thence certain valuables, described in the indictment. Now, William Sikes, I intend to try an experiment with you. You have been convicted as a burglar of exceptional skill and audacity ; I shall give you a chance of acting as an antidote to burglary. The law requires that you be kept to penal servitude for ten years. I shall, however, order you to be

released on bail for that period, pointing out to you that, should the parish of St. Marylebone remain free from burglary during the coming decade, you will escape punishment altogether."

The penal theory which Judge Curran put into practice in so striking a manner opens out almost boundless fields of speculation, if considered in connection with its possible application to the errors and weaknesses of mankind in general. Punishments of all kinds are frankly admitted by their most strenuous advocates nowadays to be preventive, not vengeful. Civilised peoples do not hang a murderer or cut off his head to avenge the wrong he has done to society by assassinating one or more of its members, but in order to deter potential murderers from taking the lives of their contemporaries. "Let us abolish the death penalty, by all means," wrote Alphonse Karr, at a time when the expediency of doing away with the guillotine was a "burning question" in France; "but let the assassins begin." Similarly, when a couple of ruffians are sent to gaol for three months, it having been proved by sufficient evidence that they have brutally maltreated the police whilst the guardians of order were engaged in the performance of their duty to the public, the main object of forcibly secluding and otherwise inconveniencing those offenders is to hinder other "roughs" from imitating their example. The law, instituted for the protection and defence of well-conducted people against malefactors, addresses a solemn warning to every criminal *in posse* whenever it punishes one *in esse*. "This," it practically says

to him by the mouth of the Judge or magistrate, "is what awaits you if you violate my prescriptions, even as this evil-doer has done."

It may be assumed that such a monition produces a deterrent effect upon many violent and unprincipled persons, who would give a free rein to their noxious impulses were they assured that no unpleasant consequences would result to them from their ill deeds. Is it likely that Judge Curran's method of dealing with crime, if generally adopted in Courts of Justice, would display a higher degree of preventive efficiency than that which has hitherto obtained? Would it work satisfactorily in connection with the mishaps and accidents of private life? Let us suppose that a merchant's clerk robs his master's cash-box; should the merchant give him a month's holiday with a view to averting further thefts in the office? Or, if a footman break a valuable china dish early in the autumn, would it be advisable to promise him a lavish Christmas-box on condition that no fracture of crockery shall take place in the kitchen during the ensuing three months? Prevention is better than cure, no doubt, with respect to crime as well as disease. The question, however, is whether or not Judge Curran's plan of punishing convicted criminals by setting them at liberty is more likely to secure tranquillity in a disturbed Irish district than the old-fashioned expedient of shutting them up in prison and making them work?

"It is never too late to learn" is in its way every whit as useful a workaday proverb as that which gave a title to one of Charles Reade's most thrilling romances

of real life. We Anglo-Saxons have the reputation of being slower of apprehension and more reluctant to adopt innovations that some of the peoples from whom we are "parted by the sea." It behoves us, therefore, to bestow our earnest and respectful attention upon every new theory or original notion, scientific, legal, or otherwise, having for its object the amelioration of human conditions, that may now and anon reach us from abroad. From an Irish point of view, Judge Curran's penal novelty belonged to this category of imported ideas; for the patriot sons of Erin are never weary of impressing upon us that the Emerald Isle, far from being an integral portion of the United Kingdom, has the most sacred of rights to be regarded as a foreign country by every born Briton. Englishmen are consequently bound to consider this Milesian "experiment" as carefully, and to weigh its merits and demerits with as conscientious a precision, as though it were the outcome of French ingenuity or German philosophical reasoning. It is nothing if not suggestive of legal reform, and in the direction of changes supremely important alike to constituted authorities and orderly citizens. Hence, before making up our minds to modify our criminal code in accordance with the principle embodied in the sentence recently pronounced at Tralee upon the brothers Healy, we must freely exercise the conjectural faculty as to what might and might not be the consequences of adopting that principle into our treatment of law-breakers of every class. The subject positively bristles with problems that appear curiously difficult of solution.

Will evilly disposed persons be restrained from committing a particular sort of offence because others, convicted of that offence, have been released upon bail? How are the territorial limits to be defined within which the moral influence of this antidote to crime may be expected to prove effective? In relation to the Healy case, Judge Curran referred somewhat vaguely to "the district," possibly meaning a part or the whole of County Kerry. Assuming that his principle of punishment were to be applied to a London pickpocket, how much of the metropolis would a Judge feel himself justified in requiring to keep itself pure from the sin of pocket-picking during the emancipation of the convicted thief on bail?

## “OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.”

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IN every European country wherein the monarchical form of government prevails there are a few eminent personages—possibly from twelve to twenty, without reckoning the members of reigning families—whose official position enables them to obtain correct information as to what is really being said and done in connection with the more important political and social questions of the day, and to achieve a tolerably accurate insight into the views and intentions of those who, like themselves, are privileged to manufacture contemporary history. Being wire-pullers of the puppets that figure on the world’s stage, they are free of the *derrière des coulisses* of rival puppet-shows, familiar with the tricks and effects of past and present performances, and well qualified to appraise the merits or defects of any novelty that may be “cast, set, and mounted” by their foreign competitors. These persons—Cabinet Ministers and Court officials of exalted rank—know how civilised mankind is governed, and are the repositories of secrets which rarely, if ever, reach the cognisance of those whose interests and destinies are most immediately affected and shaped by

them. There is also a class of *soi-disant* "well-informed" people, some hundreds in number, comprising party-leaders, ex-Ministers, permanent Under-Secretaries of State, proprietors and editors of leading newspapers, heads of great political houses, parliamentary magnates and, financial potentates, who keep touch with the wire-pullers above alluded to, and obtain occasional glimpses into the *arcana* of their motives and transactions. This class is in reality the medium through which a certain amount of more or less correct information filters slowly and sparsely for the eventual enlightenment of the intelligent public. The individuals of whom it is composed are generally described, in the editorial jargon of the press, as "the highest authorities," or, at the very least, "authoritative sources." Although the supreme mysteries of the statesman's craft are, for the most part, sealed books to them, they may fairly lay claim to the possession of approximatively accurate knowledge as to the direction in which the governmental cat is jumping, or about to jump, in the majority of political crises.

Of all European realms, England is the one in which, through the agency of a free, wealthy, and enterprising press, popular interest in matters political (foreign as well as domestic) has been the most generally stimulated and developed. Englishmen of all classes bestow more attention upon the "politics" of countries not their own than do Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, Italians, or Spaniards, not to mention the less important European nationalities, which concern themselves scarcely at all with the

internal affairs of their potent neighbours. As, however, there are only three or four hundred persons amongst the thirty odd millions of Her Majesty's subjects inhabiting these islands who are in a position to command any personal knowledge of what is actually going on in political circles abroad, the great mass of the English people is absolutely dependent upon the leading journals of the metropolis and of two or three great provincial cities for its acquaintance with the transactions of foreign Governments, the debates and enactments of foreign legislatures, the scientific and artistic developments accruing in foreign countries, and the phases of thought, fashion, and morality through which Continental society, like our own, is continuously passing.

The demand for copious information with respect to the sayings and doings of alien peoples has become extremely general and urgent within the last thirty years or so. It has been to meet this demand that newspaper proprietors have deemed it expedient to establish permanent agencies in foreign capitals for the collection and transmission to their editorial offices of the “latest intelligence,” political, social, military, and artistic; and to confide the management of such agencies to gentlemen who figure in their columns anonymously, under the generic title or designation of “Our Own Correspondent.” From these functionaries, almost exclusively—for blue-books are by no means popular reading, and Ministerial revelations in Parliament, as a rule, conceal a great deal more than they disclose—nine hundred and ninety-nine of every thou-

and Englishmen derive all the information that ever reaches them in connection with foreign affairs, and as a rule (having no means at their disposal of testing its accuracy) accept it as authentic, reproduce and promulgate it conversationally amongst their friends and acquaintances, judge the actions and utterances of native and foreign statesmen by its light, and, in fact, invest it with far greater importance than is attached to it, generally speaking, by the correspondent who telegraphs it to his employer, or by the editor who gives it publicity. I need scarcely say that this is not invariably the case. From time to time Our Own Correspondent is fortunate enough to get at information of unquestionable novelty and moment, the disclosure of which, whether it be premature or timely, directly affects the personal interests of unnumbered thousands of his contemporaries, and may even precipitate events of paramount significance to mankind at large. But his opportunities for effecting *coups* of extraordinary magnitude are necessarily few and far between.

The rulers of men are past-masters in the craft of secrecy. They seldom take newspaper correspondents into their confidence; when they do so it is invariably to serve some special purpose of their own, which they are precluded by official custom or tradition from furthering in a strictly regular way. The representative of an English newspaper in a foreign capital, therefore, being under contract with his employer to supply the latter daily with a certain amount of readable matter that may pass for news, carries out his engagement,

doubtless to the best of his ability, but with results of curiously unequal value. However intelligent and experienced he may be, he is but human, and consequently liable to error. He has to encounter great, frequently insuperable, difficulties in his quest of novel and correct intelligence. The official mind regards him as a dangerous interloper, and delights in misleading him, setting traps and pitfalls in his path, and feeding him with phrases instead of facts. His own discretion and sense of the fitness of things cannot fail to be frequently as irksome to him as the reticence or disingenuousness of persons in authority; for nearly all the really important intelligence imparted to him is disclosed under the stringent condition that he shall in no way compromise its communicant in making it publicly known. On the other hand, his employer, the newspaper proprietor, is not unnaturally anxious to make the most of any *coup* effected by the correspondent; and it will be readily understood that, in cases where the nature of the information obtained points to a particular source as the only one from which, in all human probability, it could have been derived, the tendency of the editorial office to lay stress upon its authenticity is apt to place the correspondent in an embarrassing position with respect to his informant.

The publication of news that temporarily raises or lowers the market price of stocks, and the responsibility for which cannot—save by a breach of confidence no less inexpedient, from a purely business point of view, than dishonourable—be attributed to its true source, is

one of the most serious risks of newspaper proprietorship. Official *démentis*, however untruthful they may be, are injurious to the reputation of a journal which professes to obtain its political information first-hand and from trustworthy persons. Subsequent events proving the absolute correctness of that information and the falsehood of the *dementi* do not always remedy the injury inflicted by the latter; for journalistic incidents rarely linger long in the memory of the general public, and those unlucky individuals who have lost money through the official denial of a newspaper revelation bear a grudge against the truthful newspaper, not against the lying bureaucrat. They attribute their losses to the disclosure made by the former; that the mendacity of the latter may have been conclusively demonstrated concerns them not at all. Proportionate to the intrinsic importance of a correspondent's revelation is the likelihood that it will suffer "semi-official" contradiction; that is to say, that certain journals not necessarily subventioned by foreign Governments, but utilised by them for the irresponsible promulgation of statements which they consider themselves at liberty to repudiate, if it suit them to do so—either publish an absolute denial of the revelation in question, or turn it, more or less ponderously, into ridicule, not infrequently ascribing dishonesty as well as imbecility to the correspondent who has put it forward in the simple fulfilment of his duty to his employer. Possibly the correspondent derived his information from the lips of the very Minister who has instructed the director of the press-bureau to deny its authenticity and asperse

the character of its promulgator. The latter, in such a case, is bound to swallow the *démenti* in silence; as for the imputations personal to himself, he must put up with them as best he may. Even when his lips are not sealed by any direct or implied pledge, neither he nor his employer can venture to disclose the name of his informant; for such a step, whilst involving a momentary victory of truth over falsehood, would practically disqualify him from continuing to occupy his post, by closing every official door to him and blocking all his sources of information. His only alternative to a martyrdom of indignant silence—to seeming acquiescence in the justice of the accusations brought against him—would be to throw up his appointment, publish an exact account of the means by which he obtained the impugned information, and appeal to public opinion for an impartial judgment between himself and the Minister who has deliberately sacrificed him to some consideration of political expediency.

But newspaper correspondents—men, for the most part, who consent to exile themselves from their native countries and break up all their family ties and home associations in order to earn a few hundreds a year—are seldom possessed of private means enabling them to assert their independence by giving up a certain for an uncertain income. Nowadays, as I shall show farther on, they are not even necessarily literary men, endowed with those special gifts or acquirements that are always in demand amongst the *impresarii* of journals or periodicals. Their own branch of the journalistic profession is a small and slender one, and,

owing to certain prejudices or traditions obtaining amongst the majority of newspaper proprietors, a foreign correspondent who has quitted the service of one journal, either by resignation or dismissal, finds it scarcely possible to obtain employment in his own line on the staff of any other newspaper. When, therefore, he has been utilised and thrown over by a great statesman or accomplished diplomatist, the best thing he can do in his own interest, as well as in that of his paper, is to hold his tongue, bend his head to the bitter blast of *démenti* until it shall have spent its force, and trust to time—the only effectual corrector of blunders and righter of wrongs—to vindicate his veracity and honour. It is more frequently and oppressively the lot of the newspaper correspondent than of any other variety of journalist to be compelled to bear “the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy take;” but, on the other hand, his employer, as a rule, trusts him implicitly, and backs him up with unflinching loyalty; whilst he has the supreme satisfaction of knowing that his fellow-countrymen almost invariably take his word in preference to that of a foreign official editor (the salaried mouthpiece of an unscrupulous Minister), who will at any moment contradict himself “by command,” just as readily and absolutely as he will impeach the probity of a fellow-journalist.

Of the numerous incidents, pregnantly illustrating the wrongs to which foreign correspondents must perforce submit in silence, that reached my personal cognisance in the course of many years’ sojourn in Continental capitals as the representative of a great

London newspaper, one in particular appears to me worthy of narration in this place. It created no small sensation in three European realms at the time of its occurrence ; but its true story could not then be told, for more than one good and sufficient reason, nor can it even now with propriety be recounted in full, for two or three of the persons who played leading parts in it are still living, a circumstance that necessitates the suppression of some of its most interesting details. Briefly and discreetly sketched, however, it runs as follows :

Peace had been concluded between two powerful nations after a fiercely fought and costly war. The fulfilment of the peace conditions accepted by the conquered Power was an operation extending over a considerable period of time, and had only been executed in part by the Power in question, strictly in accordance with covenant, when circumstances arose which threatened to disturb the newly established pacific relations between victor and vanquished, and in point of fact to lead very suddenly to a renewal of hostilities. A legislative measure of extraordinary moment was framed by the Government of the conquered nation, submitted to Parliament, and received by that body in a manner which admitted of no doubt that, should the Cabinet proceed in the usual manner with its Bill, the latter would be passed by a large majority of the Legislature. So repugnant was this measure to the Government of the victorious nation, that, could the Bill not have been quashed by any less violent means, an ultimatum signifying that a resumption of warlike operations would be the penalty of persistence would assuredly have been

despatched, within forty-eight hours of the time to which I am referring, to the capital in which the Bill was then undergoing discussion. To take this extreme step, however, would have placed the conquerors in a curiously awkward position with relation to European public opinion; for the measure to which they so vehemently objected was a purely domestic one, such as every nation has an indisputable right to take in its own interest, without consulting friend or foe. No stipulation, express or inferential, contained in the Treaty of Peace justified either Power in interfering with the other respecting questions of internal legislation; in short, the prohibition, emphasized by menace, to which one of the high contracting parties had resolved to commit itself, *couête que couête*, rather than run the risks involved in the passing of the obnoxious measure by its quondam enemy, could not but have been regarded by civilised mankind as a brutal aggression—an audacious and wholly unjustifiable exemplification in practice of the cynical axiom, "La force prime le droit."

Matters were at this critical pass when an ambassador, accredited to the Court of the conquering Power, gave an evening party. Amongst his guests were the Premier of the Government then in office at —, and the correspondent of a leading London newspaper. This gentleman was personally acquainted with the great Minister, to whom he was privileged to have access whenever he made special application for an audience. In view of the gravity of the situation, he had sought and obtained permission to call upon His Excellency on the morrow of the reception above

mentioned. Consequently, knowing how reluctant official personages are to be earwigged and button-holed during their hours of relaxation from toil, the correspondent, encountering the Minister by chance in a diplomatist's drawing-room, did not verbally accost him, but bowed and passed on. As he was working his way through the crowded *salon*, he felt a heavy hand upon his shoulder, and, turning round, found himself face to face with M. de —, who said to him, "Come into the ambassadress's boudoir with me; I want to speak to you to-night, instead of to-morrow." Mr. — at once complied with His Excellency's request, and the latter proceeded to deliver himself of a series of disclosures so startling in character and of such tremendous importance that, after listening to him for several minutes in ever-growing amazement, his interlocutor interrupted him, saying, "Pardon me the question, but does your Excellency remember that I am a journalist? or, to put it even more plainly, am I to consider what you have told me a private communication, or one that you desire to be made public through the medium of the newspaper I represent?" "I am speaking to you," was the reply, "in this way *because* you are a journalist; and you are at liberty to publish every fact with which I have acquainted you in the columns of your journal. Indeed, I wish you to do so, as thereby great calamities may be averted. All that I exact from you as a man of honour is that you make no public mention of my name in connection with the information I am now giving to you. You can, of course, tell your chief editor that you received your news direct

from me. That will be a sufficient guarantee of its authenticity. But I must not personally appear in the matter. Is it a bargain?" To this proposal the correspondent joyfully agreed, for his faith in the chivalric nature and straightforwardness of M. de — was unbounded, and he felt deeply grateful to that statesman for putting him in the way of enabling his newspaper to make one of those brilliant *coupés* which so splendidly enhance even the most distinguished journalistic reputation. He at once resolved—with a view to the more certain preservation of his informant's secret—to efface himself completely with regard to the information thus imparted to him, and, in communicating the entire interview to his employer in London, requested that its purport should be embodied in an editorial article, authoritatively written, but observing absolute silence as to the source from which the intelligence imparted to the public in that form had been obtained. Before taking this step, however—being a man of considerable political experience and some natural prudence—he sought out his fellow-countryman, the ambassador in whose house the interview had taken place, and acquainted him, to the minutest detail, with every atom of information he (the correspondent) had gathered from M. de —. The ambassador, I may observe parenthetically, was so deeply impressed by the importance of that information that he transmitted it in cipher by wire to his Government in the course of that very night, which was spent by the correspondent in inditing a despatch of several thousand words to the proprietor of his newspaper. Subsequent events conclusively proved the wisdom of the precautionary measure by which he

had placed the ambassador *au courant* of the situation, for that exalted functionary was thereby enabled, at a highly critical moment, to confirm the correspondent's statements (confidentially, of course) in a quarter where the lack of such unimpeachable confirmation might have wrought Mr. —— irreparable injury.

In due course of time the news appeared, set forth with excellent discretion in an editorial article, which, however, was so manifestly prompted by authentic and authoritative information, that it caused a panic upon the principal European Stock Exchanges. Civilised mankind, then only just relieved from the pain and anxiety of contemplating a long and sanguinary struggle between two valiant and powerful peoples, was horror-stricken at the prospect of a proximate renewal of the slaughter and destruction of property which had so recently been stayed by a Treaty of Peace. I will not dwell upon the effect produced by the article in question upon the Power that had succumbed in that supreme trial of national strength. Suffice it to say that the end was attained to achieve which a great Minister had taken a humble newspaper correspondent into his confidence —was attained with amazing promptitude, and with a completeness that at once relieved M. de —— from all the terrible responsibilities imposed upon him by the imprudence of his country's vanquished foes. To be brief, the objectionable portions of the obnoxious Bill were instantly suppressed, or so radically modified as to be purged of their menacing and provocative character; and assurances of the most pacific nature, pleasantly flavoured with polite apology, were proffered to and accepted by the Government of the victorious nation.

Simultaneously with these proceedings, which convincingly demonstrated the perfect success of the *coup* so ingeniously devised and skilfully executed by M. de —, there appeared in the semi-official press-organ of his Government an editorial paragraph in large type, to the effect that the statements in connection with the alleged international crisis, published in such and such a London newspaper of such and such a date, were absolutely devoid of foundation in fact ; and that, moreover, there was good reason to believe that those statements had been "derived from a muddy source." The immediate result of this astounding announcement was that the London newspaper alluded to was assailed by a storm of reproach and obloquy, raging with equal fury at home and abroad. It was burnt with more or less solemnity within the precincts of more than one Continental Bourse, and suffered, I believe, a similar indignity at the hands of a few exasperated jobbers on 'Change in the metropolis. Its timely and true revelations were stigmatised as falsehoods, prompted by the basest motives ; its correspondent, although he had not figured in connection with those disclosures, was accused of accompliceship with a ring of swindling financiers. The invention of one of his foreign colleagues was so highly stimulated by a paroxysm of patriotic ire as to put forward the positive assertion that Mr. — had cleared a million of francs *à la baisse*, as his share of the plunder ; and this statement was published in a leading Continental journal, of which, I need scarcely say, the maligned correspondent received several carefully marked copies, forwarded to him by persons professing to hold him in high esteem. His position in the capital in which his residence was

fixed became an extremely distressing one. Many of his acquaintances—all those, indeed, connected with the local official circles—looked askance at him and shunned his society for some considerable time. He received private intimations that his attendance at Court entertainments and Ministerial receptions could be dispensed with until further notice. Meanwhile, his employers stuck to him manfully through thick and thin. They kept his secret and that of his informant inviolate, despite the heavy public pressure brought to bear upon them to disclose the source of their information. That it would have been a great relief to them to do so they hinted to their correspondent, but only once, and in the most delicate manner. He endeavoured to obtain permission to justify them and himself, but in vain ; upon which they very kindly begged him not to trouble himself any further about the matter, as they were strong enough to “see it out” without budging an inch from the authoritative position they had steadfastly maintained throughout the whole untoward episode.

And so they were. Within a week from the publication of the *démenti* above quoted—which, it should be added, *was never withdrawn*—they had scored a triumph of the first order, from a journalistic point of view. The modifications imported into the offending Bill and the “relaxation of the strain that had accrued in the relations of two great European Powers” (I quote from an official *communiqué* published at the time) were formally announced by organs of the respective Governments ; and it became apparent to the dullest apprehension that the vilified journal had, from first to last, been correctly informed, whilst its revilers and calumniators had simply been the shortsighted

victims of a gigantic and surpassingly audacious "semi-official" hoax.

As soon as the *revirement* in public opinion had become general, Mr. — found the asperities of his position less and less irksome daily, until they finally effaced themselves in obedience to the *mot d'ordre* of "As you were!" which had been issued, officially and socially, in his regard. But the great Minister, having done him a serious wrong—indeed, all but ruined him—naturally enough could not forgive him; and though he continued to occupy his post at — for six years after the events above narrated, the fulfilment of his duties was rendered so difficult to him by the ill-will of the statesman whom he had implicitly trusted, to whom he had loyally kept his plighted word, and who had, to say the least of it, dealt somewhat unscrupulously with him, that his employers finally transferred him to another European capital, where he still renders them efficient and highly appreciated services. It is from himself that I have gathered the details of the episode above narrated, which is an interesting exemplification of the dangers and distresses incidental to the "Foreign Correspondent's" career. He had to endure discrediting imputations in silence, when a word from his lips would have cleared his reputation to the world. But for the perfect trust reposed in him by the proprietors of the newspaper he represented, he might have lost his appointment, and have found himself, in the meridian of his days, compelled to start afresh in the race of life, heavily handicapped by an implication of misconduct which, as the world goes, would in all probability have clung to him the more persistently because it was

intrinsically unjust. That this paramount calamity did not befall him was a mere accident, by no means considered in the calculations of the statesman who deliberately sacrificed him, in order to achieve an end, it must be admitted, of incalculable importance to uncounted millions of human beings. That end, in the opinion of the person compassing it, doubtless justified the means by which it was attained. But my friend Mr. —— could hardly be expected to regard the transaction from this point of view. It is obviously the destiny of certain fish to be caught by dexterous anglers; but, judging from their demeanour when they have been skilfully landed, they can scarcely be said to undergo that process with unmixed enjoyment.

To discharge the duties of his post efficiently “Our Own Correspondent” should be a man of very exceptional qualities and accomplishments—a sort of latter-day Admirable Crichton. That he should be well bred, and thoroughly versed in the “tricks and manners” of good society, is essential to his fitness for the more delicate missions with which, from time to time, he is sure to be entrusted. As a rule, the resident representatives abroad of British newspapers are gentlemen, according to the generally accepted meaning of that denomination. Of the one or two existing exceptions to the rule, it may with truth be said that great natural astuteness and indomitable perseverance in the quest of political information stand them in the stead of tact, discretion, and polite manners, and even give them a certain advantage over their less scrupulous and, socially speaking, more presentable colleagues. “Our Own Correspondent” should be qualified by his personal

antecedents to take part as a guest—not as a mere spectator in a gallery or antechamber—in the entertainments given by the Court, Ministers, and foreign diplomatists of the capital in which his residence may happen to be fixed. Not to have the *entrée* of Royal palaces and ambassadorial hotels is to miss many opportunities of meeting persons directly engaged in the fabrication of contemporary history, and of obtaining, in a seemingly casual way, political and social intelligence of considerable moment. My own experience as a correspondent, extending over nearly thirteen years of successive sojourn in Vienna, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Bucharest, and Cairo, convinces me that more news of interest and value is to be gathered in the *salon* than in the Ministerial *bureau* or diplomatic *chancellerie*.

It is a *sine quâ non* that the correspondent should be a linguist; at the very least, that the language of the country to which he is accredited should be as familiar to him as his own. A mere workaday acquaintance with it will not suffice; he must be thoroughly conversant with its *finesse*, *nuances*, and social slang, and capable of rendering their exact significance in his native tongue; for in the discussion of nice political issues, much may depend upon the correct or incorrect interpretation and reproduction (in another idiom) of a subtle *tournure de phrase*. French, being a language universally current in Court circles, diplomatic and bureaucratic cliques of the higher class, and really good Continental society, will serve the correspondent's turn passing well in his relations with the vast majority of personages upon whom he will find himself dependent for trustworthy information *omnium generum*. But in

every European capital, except Paris and St. Petersburg, he will find it his true interest—and consequently that of his employers—to be able to converse and correspond with the local magnates of every class of society in "the language of the country." Few people speak as freely and unreservedly in a foreign tongue as in their own. In the case of the correspondent this circumstance is comparatively unimportant, for his function is to listen intelligently rather than to discourse instructively. But it is manifestly his object to be talked to with a minimum of restraint on the part of his interlocutor, to whom the mere mechanical effort of arranging his thoughts for expression in an alien idiom may give time wherein to abate the measure of his communicativeness, and reconsider the expediency of making some trifling disclosure that would probably have escaped him in the flow of his "native eloquence."

Discretion, tact, and imperturbable temper are three of the most valuable gifts with which a newspaper correspondent, resident in a foreign country, can be endowed. If he lack any one of these endowments, he is unfit to occupy an important post *en permanence*, although he may do good work, and even now and then make brilliant *coups*, as a "Special." But an English journalist, called upon to live year in, year out, in Paris, Berlin, or Vienna, for example, and to observe a chronically interrogative attitude towards pretty nearly all the "sons of the soil" with whom he is brought into social contact, has need of all the qualities, characteristics, and acquirements above alluded to in order not to become obnoxious—nay, intolerable --to the people among whom his lot is cast. His

reports to his journal will be eagerly watched, and whatever censure, or even criticism, of local politics, men, manners, and customs they may contain will be bitterly resented, and will constitute an inexhaustible source of annoyance to its author. Many persons of condition will fight shy of him because he is a journalist, and therefore—appraised by the standard of their own local pressmen—necessarily indiscreet, ill-mannered, and venal. Others will object to him on the general ground that he is an Englishman living abroad, and therefore under some sort of a cloud ; for I regret to say that the impression prevails throughout good society on the Continent that a born Briton who, not being in diplomacy or business, takes up his abode in a foreign town, has probably quitted his country for his country's good, and by reason of circumstances over which he has had no control. To persons entertaining this particular prejudice his linguistic attainments—assuming that he possesses the gift of tongues—will only confirm their desire to avoid him and their inward conviction that he cannot possibly be a reputable or even respectable member of society. Prince von Bismarck himself confessed to an acquaintance of mine, some years ago, that he was always suspicious of Englishmen who spoke French idiomatically and without accent. "I have known many such," he added, "but only one thoroughly upright, trustworthy, and estimable man amongst them; to wit, Odo Russell, whose French is as good as his disposition. There was something shady about all the others. An Englishman who speaks French like a Frenchman is not altogether an Englishman. We Germans are more plastic than the English, and there-

fore learn foreign languages more easily than you islanders, than whom, moreover, we have a more musical ear, which is a great help to picking up a good accent. But I am glad to say that we, too, speak French very badly, though we study it exhaustively. Semi-barbaric races, such as the Slavs, for instance, whose leading characteristics are cunning and insincerity, acquire French with the greatest readiness. Many Russians and Poles speak it better than average Frenchmen. But if an Englishman does so, depend upon it there is something radically wrong about him. Look at G——, and L——, and D——” (the Chancellor here mentioned the names of three English statesmen enjoying a European renown for their perfect mastery of the French idiom), “they are not persons of whom I should be proud as compatriots were I an Englishman!”

It is desirable, but at the present day not indispensable, that the “foreign correspondent” should be a forcible, eloquent, and picturesque writer. In his case the demand for literary style has been all but done away with by the telegraph-wire, which has robbed him of his most agreeable and sympathetic function, and converted him into a laconic compounder of epitomes. Little more than a decade ago newspaper proprietors and their clients, the general public, valued good descriptive matter, sketches of character, and studies of national or local manners, customs, and peculiarities, at least as highly as dry digests of the views of people they had never seen, or of political questions they did not understand. Nowadays they ask to be supplied with facts, and nothing but facts, set forth in the fewest possible words—for telegrams

are costly commodities, and the use of electricity has superinduced a tendency to summarise in the reader as well as in the purveyor of news. The correspondent is required to boil his information down to a mere skeleton and pack the dry bones into a small parcel, to be forwarded daily to his employer. To explain or expound is no longer any part of his business, although he should, and probably does, know more about the significance of the news he transmits than the London leader-writer who interprets its meaning to the public. But elucidation and comment are held to be exclusively editorial functions, for the exercise of which the correspondent is merely expected to supply material. He is, therefore, becoming a collecting-clerk in the news trade, attached for so many hours or minutes *per diem* to the tail of a telegraph-wire. I am acquainted with two or three correspondents of high renown in their craft, who are not only forlorn of literary ability, but would be painfully embarrassed were they called upon to write half-a-dozen sentences of correct English. They are, however, men of extraordinary energy and perseverance, indefatigable in the pursuit and successful in the capture of news, not to be discouraged by official reticence or personal snubs, supremely active, *remuant*, and intrusive—in short, the perfect outcome of a want that was created shortly after the termination of the Franco-German war, by the adoption in the great London newspaper offices of the telegraph as the correspondent's regular (instead of exceptional, as thitherto) medium of communication with his editor. This was an American innovation. It revolutionised one important department of English

journalism, and deprived the "foreign correspondent" of the old school of his *raison d'être*. He gradually dropped out of the race, in most cases lapsing into journalism proper, and making room for men more fit than himself to fulfil the requirements of the age. Long letters, learned, thoughtful, descriptive, or humorous, frequently masterpieces of literature and delightful reading, had had their day, and were relegated to the limbo of discarded superfluities. *Précis* writing, *résumés* of "the situation," abstracts of "interviews," and journalistic meat-lozenges of current intelligence came into vogue; and the correspondent who could condense a policy into a paragraph of inexpensive brevity suddenly acquired a pecuniary value which had never been set upon his literary predecessor. It is but just to him to acknowledge that he has held his own with considerable *éclat* for some years past, and has thrown a vast amount of bright and startling light upon contemporary history. Many revelations of genuine importance, by which the eyes of nations have been opened to the amazing devices by which they are governed, have emanated from these stirring and sharp-sighted gentlemen, who, being adepts in the art of "plucking out the heart of a mystery," are at once the *bêtes noires* of statesmen and diplomatists, and the pride and joy of newspaper proprietors.

Some of the most distinguished and efficient correspondents abroad of London newspapers with whom I have been brought into personal relation, and who, indeed, have honoured me with their friendship, were not Englishmen by birth, though, one and all, they wrote our language with remarkable force, facility, and

grace. Of three of these in particular, I may venture to say unhesitatingly that men of more shining ability or of profounder political sagacity have never been attached to the foreign staff of any metropolitan journal. I refer to General Eber, Count Arrivabene, and Dr. Abel. The two former, I regret to say, have joined the majority, and are where editors cease from troubling and the wire is at rest. Dr. Abel, I believe, has renounced journalism, and accepted a professorial chair. Of my colleagues actually in harness and manfully doing their *devoirs* in the thick of the political fray I am restrained by professional considerations from speaking in this place; for by journalistic tradition a newspaper correspondent is held to be an anonymous personage in this country, at least, although his impersonality is little respected by the so-called "society papers"; and it would ill become an old member of the guild to imitate the indiscretion of irresponsible outsiders. But of the three eminent men above alluded to, who have vacated their places in the foremost rank of a valiant little host to which it was formerly my privilege to belong, I may perhaps be permitted to say a few words, dictated by sincere admiration of their brilliant talents and fine personal qualities, as well as by the conviction that any information with respect to persons who have rendered valuable service to the public, even in an unofficial capacity, will be read with interest.

General Eber was by birth a Hungarian, but earned in Italy the high military rank by which he set greater store than by other and more solid rewards of his adventurous career. He played a conspicuous part in

the uprising of his countrymen in 1848, and in the subsequent struggles against Austria and Russia which terminated so disastrously for the patriots of Pannonia. Like Louis Kossuth, Julius Andrassy, Francis Pulszky, and hundreds of other Hungarian notables, he was compelled to flee from his native land in disguise when the national movement finally collapsed under the blight of Goergey's memorable surrender, and thereafter, until Baron Beust brought about full and perfect reconciliation between the hostile moieties of the Hapsburg dual realm in the spring of 1867, was a proscribed exile, conspiring or fighting in the cause of liberty wherever his abilities as a writer or soldier could best be utilised by oppressed nationalities. Like his gifted compatriot, General Tuerr, and many a gallant Magyar besides, he lent himself, heart, soul, and body, to Italy's successive efforts to shake off the Austrian yoke. As an emissary and propagandist of Italian emancipation, he was trusted with equal implicitness by Cavour and Mazzini, workers towards one and the same ends, but by different methods. He fought through the 1859 campaign in Lombardy as a volunteer, and acted as chief of the staff to Garibaldi in 1860 throughout the operations on the mainland of the Neapolitan kingdom and the audacious expedition to Sicily. It was, I have been assured, during that year of dazzling surprises that he became connected with the influential London newspaper which he thenceforth served in the successive capacities of "Our Special" and "Our Own" correspondent until the day of his death, only a few months ago. On returning to Hungary, after the general amnesty of 1867, he enlisted under the political banner of Francis

Déak, and in course of time became a member of the Hungarian Legislature. His fellow-exiles of 1849 had been summoned to the councils of their sovereign, and, it need scarcely be added, had no secrets from their old comrade and friend. Eber was thus enabled to know everything that took place behind the political and social scenes in Vienna, Pesth, and even in other European capitals. He was invaluable to his journalistic employers, for his information could always be relied upon as absolutely authentic. Amongst his many splendid gifts was an almost marvellous familiarity with the letter and spirit of half-a-dozen languages. As far as English was concerned, his public work bears convincing testimony to the exhaustiveness of his acquaintance with our difficult idiom ; and I may mention that I have frequently received English letters from him, the style and diction of which would have done credit to Herbert Spencer or John Ruskin. Indeed, he was at his best in private correspondence, for the somewhat ponderous literary manner of the journal to which he contributed (and which plumed itself upon imposing its duller characteristics upon the permanent members of its staff) not only fretted him exceedingly, but constrained him to express his views and ideas in print with a formality, not to say stiffness, that was entirely foreign to his natural style and repulsive to his literary instincts. In private life Eber was a singularly amiable man, a staunch friend, and an entertaining companion. He lived and died alone, a love disappointment in early life having inspired him with a deep distrust of women, which he was never able to overcome, although his charming manners and amusing conversation caused him to be

regarded with marked favour by the fair sex in general. He was an ideal colleague, altogether free from petty professional jealousy, and ever ready to assist his fellow-correspondents to the utmost of his power, which was great.

Count Arrivabene, sometime the head of an ancient and illustrious Italian noble family, had also suffered political exile, some years of which he passed in England, where he acquired a fine scholarly knowledge of our language, became acquainted with many eminent political and literary personages, and wrote assiduously for more than one Liberal journal on the subject, I need scarcely say, of his country's wrongs, to the righting of which he had devoted his talents and sacrificed his prospects. Subsequently, when he was permitted to return to the land of his birth, he acted as the resident correspondent of a well-known London morning paper in the successive capitals of New Italy—Turin, Florence, and Rome—whence for many years he supplied the English public with a vast amount of correct and interesting information respecting the internal developments of constitutional self-government in the Ausonian peninsula. He also sat in the Italian Parliament, and took an active part in the manipulation of several important questions connected with the domestic and foreign policy of Italy. His death, which took place at a comparatively recent date, was lamented by his fellow-countrymen as a national loss. Count Arrivabene wrote strong and sparkling English, but, despite his long residence in London, had never succeeded in mastering the chief "eccentricities" (as he was wont to say) of our pronunciation. He was a true patriot, thorough gentleman, and admirable newspaper correspondent.

Of Dr. Abel, I am glad to say, it is not necessary to speak in the past tense, save in referring to his journalistic achievements. This eminent philologist was for several years the Berlin representative of a leading English daily paper, and was specially renowned in ethnological as well as political circles for his profound knowledge of the languages and dialects spoken throughout Eastern Europe, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, as well as of the races inhabiting the European frontier regions of the Russian and Turkish empires. Finnish, Lettish, Wendish, and the jargon of the "Water-Poles" are as familiar to Dr. Abel as his native German, or as English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and Turkish. He is, indeed, a master of twenty-three living and dead languages, including such out-of-the-way idioms as Roumanian and Basque. I have seen him write Egyptian hieroglyphics as currently as I am penning these lines ; and some years ago he published a book of seven hundred pages, having for its subject two obsolete Coptic words. Of all the learned men it has ever been my good fortune to foregather with, he is the most erudite and comprehensive. He took up politics partly as a recreation and partly as a source of regular income ; studied the science, if it may be dignified by that designation, with characteristic assiduity, found that there was nothing in it worthy of an earnest *savant's* serious attention, and gave it up to return to his beloved etymological researches.

The greater number of the residential English correspondents abroad at the present time is composed of trained journalists ; but formerly—let us say twenty five years ago, when I entered the profession—the

appointments to these posts were frequently bestowed upon gentlemen who had led adventurous lives, such as English ex-officers of foreign armies, or cadets of good families whom a sudden turn of Fortune's wheel had compelled to pitch their tents in some foreign capital, and whom some influential friend—generally a diplomatist acquainted with editors—had recommended to the chief of a London newspaper as a person admirably qualified to supply that journal with authentic and readable intelligence from such and such a Continental empire or kingdom. I remember well that when I took up my first residential post in Vienna during the fateful summer of 1866, two of my three English colleagues in the Kaiserstadt, Boner and Bird, were distinguished book-men who had occupied the position of tutor in the families of influential Austrian and Hungarian magnates, and had received their journalistic appointments (which they were well fitted to hold) through the exercise of commanding influence on their behalf by the noblemen whose sons they had indoctrinated in the "humanities," and whose daughters they had instructed in the language of Shakespeare. Another correspondent of renown, Hardman, whose acquaintance I made in those good old days when the tyranny of the wire was unknown to "Our Own," and but seldom brought to bear even on "Our Special," had been a captain in the British Legion that went through so much hard campaigning in Spain under De Lacy Evans, and had drifted, quite by accident, into a berth on the foreign staff of the leading London journal of forty years ago. He was a man who had seen a great deal of the world, and had con-

templated all classes of Continental society from various points of view ; a capital linguist, confirmed *bon-vivant*, and right good fellow. The names of Charles Lever, Thomas Adolphus Trollope, Lawrence Oliphant, Camille Barrère, Arminius Vambéry, and Francis Pulszky must not be omitted from the list of quondam "Our Own Correspondents" with whom I have been acquainted, and have claimed as colleagues with unfeigned pride and exultation ; for they were indeed bright ornaments of the profession in which, despite all its drawbacks and disappointments, I passed thirteen of the happiest and most instructive years of my life—a period so crowded with interesting experiences and pleasant associations that I shall ever look back to it with kindly remembrance and thankfulness for the countless opportunities it afforded to me of gaining some real insight into the history of the eventful epoch which, opening with the Schleswig-Holstein campaign and closing—as far as my art and part in it were concerned—with the Congress of Berlin, included amongst its many thrilling episodes the achievement of German and Italian unity, of Roumanian and Servian independence, and of Austro-Hungarian reconciliation ; all of which mighty feats, I respectfully venture to remind my fellow-countrymen, have been chronicled for their instruction and entertainment by the envoys of enterprising English newspapers ; in a word—or rather, in two words—by "Our Own Correspondents."

THE END.





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